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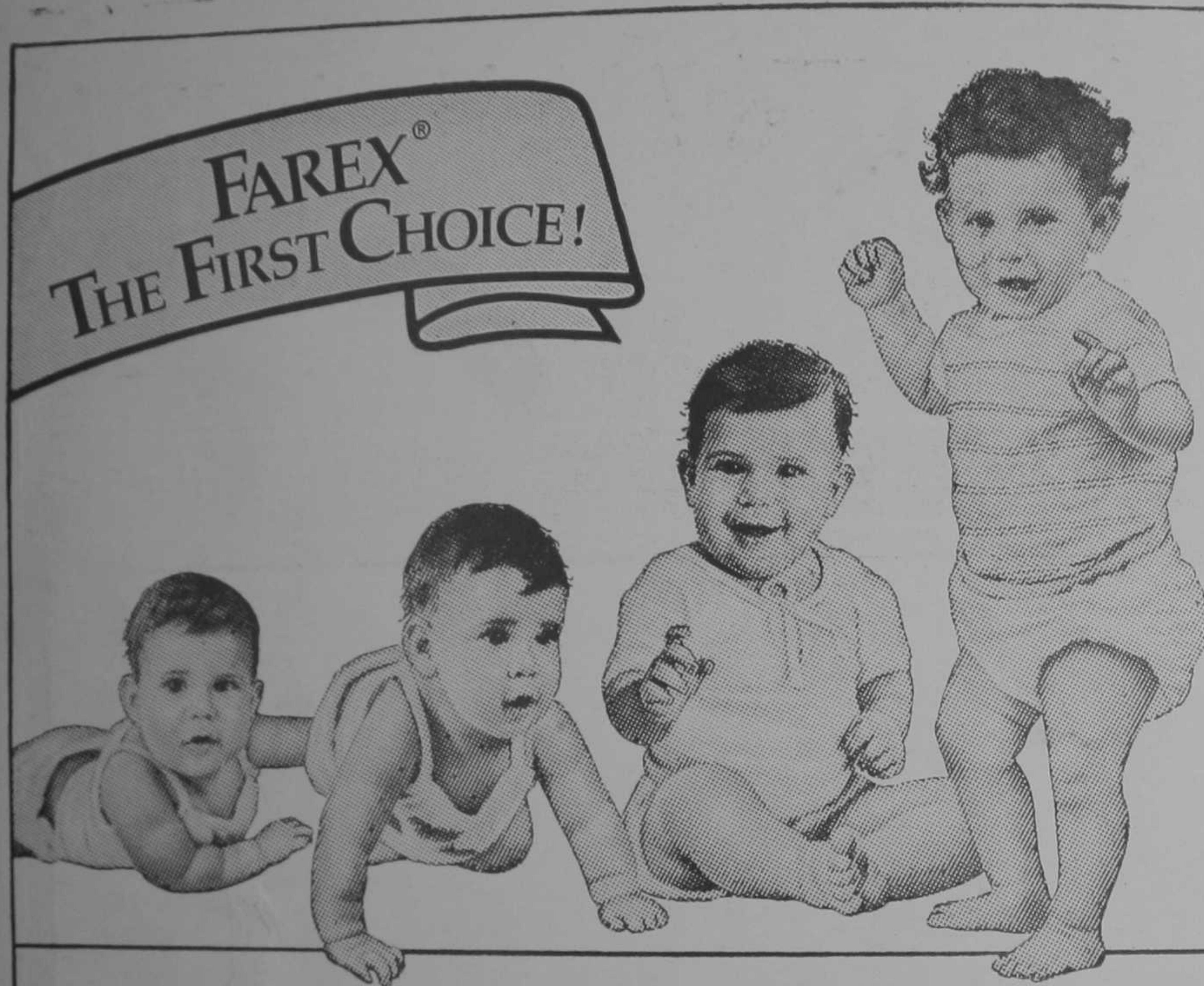
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EDITOR : K. S. MAHADEVAN

## Pic on Cover

Veteran Tabla Wizard Tirakwa was present when the Mridangam genius Mani Iyer was playing at a concert in South Bombay many years ago. This photo captures Tirakwa congratulating Mani Iyer after one of his most inspired thanis—but the respect was apparently mutual, to judge from the modesty of Mani Iyer's reaction—Ed.



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## Ragamalika-Garlands of Melodies

By

Prof. K. R. Rajagopalan

Raga is a melody and Mala is a garland. Hence a Ragamalika can be freely translated as a garland of melodies. This concept of ragamalika is as old as the concept of a raga itself. It is always more interesting to listen to a string of ragas coming one after another - rather than listening to the same melody for a longer period. Great musicians like Ariakudy Ramanuja Iyengar invariably sang a ragamalika towards the close of their memorable concerts.

The earlier name used by Matanga and others was *Ragakadambaka*. In this, different sections of a prabandha were set to be sung in different ragas and talas. Abjagarbha, Aredita, Bhramara, Nandya-varta and Swastika are referred to as varieties of *ragakadambaka*.

Coming to more recent times, both pre-Trinity and post-Trinity composers have composed a number of ragamalikas. There have been ragamalika-s in the different types of musical compositions as well-Swarajati-s, Varnam-s, and Keertana-s. There have been attempts to make an ordinary set of songs set to a string of raga-s but these have been of recent origin. One can cite the instance of GNB making a ragamalika of Bharatiyar's songs; or MSS from verses in Silappadikaram or Divyaprabandham; or Mani Krishnaswamy setting

the various stanzas of Vedanta Desika to various raga-s; or S. G. Kittappa, in his inimitable style singing கோடையிலே இகைப் பாற்றி (Kodai-ile-ilaippaatri); or Maharaja puram Santhanam singing in his characteristic melodious way Saarangamarugane - which is almost a string of the raga names alone.

A student learns Swarajati-s, Varna-s and Keertana-s and Pallavi in that order. Let us also trace regamalalika-s in the same order.

### Swarajati-s

Swati Tirunal Maharaja of Travancore has composed one beginning with the words 'Sanisarisa' set to the following raga-s - Kalyani, Begada, Athana, Surati and Todi. A sahitya for this is also being sung nowadays, but the words are of an unknown author and not Swati Tirunal's. It is dedicated to Lord Padmanabha, the patron deity of the Travancore Rulers. Perhaps one of the court poets or singers might have composed this Sahitya. It should, however, be said that it is full of Swara-akshara passages and blends nicely with the swaras in a natural way. A special feature of this Swarajati is that Panchama is completely absent in the Todi part and Gandhara from the Surati part of the song.



## Varna-s

Kalahasti Veena Venkataswami has composed a varna in Adi tala starting with 'Intakopa melara'. The sahitya is in Telugu. The Pallavi is in Nata, the Anupallavi is in Gowla with end-svara-s in Varali and Aarabhi. The Charana is in Sri raga followed by Swara-patterns in raga-s - Narayanagowla, Reetigowla and Kedara.

The well known "Valachi Vachi", a navaragamalika varna in Telugu, was composed by Patnam Subrahmanya Iyer. There are separate ragas for Pallavi, Anupallavi, Swara-s, Charana and its Swara-s. The raga-s used are: Kedara, Sankarabharana, Kalyani, Begada, Kambhoji, Yadukula-kambhoji, Bilahari, Mohana and Sri.

Veena Seshanna (1852-1926) of Mysore has also composed Varnas in which more than one raga is used. His 'Kamakoti Sundaranguda' in Telugu is set in Misra Triputa tala - a tala not commonly used for varna-s. The whole varna is in one raga and after the last swara of the charana is over, one avarta-swara in each raga is to be sung. Rare ragas like Abheri and Kokila are used. There is another piece in Begada called "Mahisasura Sancharini" in which the ragamalika section of swara-s contains the following raga-s - Nata, Gowla, Durbar, Nayaki, Yaman, Purvi, Karnataka Kapi, Chittamohini.\*

Karigiri Rao (1853-1927) also of Mysore, has a varna "Lalitakala Parangate" in Jhampa tala. There are nine ragas, with ragamudra also being present. The sahitya in each avarta of a raga begins with

the first letter of the name of the raga viz. Lalita Kala (Lalita). Anandadayani (Anandabhairavi).

Prof. Sambamurthy, the well known musicologist has composed a ragamalika Varna in the Telugu language. The eight raga-s used are: Bilahari, Dhanyasi, Madhyamavati, Kalyani, Poorvikalyani, Kedaragowla, Mohana and Bhoopala. The raga names are also strung together as Sahitya- Pallavi of 2 avartanas in Bilahari, Anupallavi of same length in Dhanyasi, Muktai Swaras in the next raga, Charana of 1 avartana in Kalyani, Swara of 1 avartana in Poorvikalyani followed by three sets of swaras of 2 avartana each in Kedaragowla and Mohana, ending with a 4 avartana swara in Bhoopala—going back to the Pallavi in Bilahari (This has been published in "Practical Course in Karnatic Music Book III" in Madras in 1970).†

Veena Kuppier's "Intakopamelara" also in Telugu is set to Adi tala of 2-kalai. The five ghana ragas are followed by Narayanagowla, Reetigowla, Bowli and Kedara.

Subbarama Deekshitar (1839-1906), the grandson of Muthuswamy Deekshitar of the Trinity of Karnataka Music, has also a varna in nine ragas (Kalyani, Todi, Saveri, Athana, Neelambari, Manirangu, Kambhoji, Mukhari and Mohana). It begins with the following words - "Garavamu Ganna Dora" and is on Lord Subrahmanya.

\* For this and further information on Mysore musicians and composers, the author is indebted to Dr. M. B. Vedavalli's - "Mysore as a seat of music during the 19th and 20th centuries"—an unpublished Ph. D. thesis of the University of Madras.

Vadivelu of the Tanjore Quartette (disciples of Muthuswamy Deekshitar) composed a varna in Bhairavi in Telugu with the words "Neerjakshuda". The last ethugada swaras are in Kalyani, Kambhoji, Kapi and Mohana raga-s.

Swati Tirunal's "Sumasayaka" in Sanskrit set to Roopaka tala also follows the same pattern as the above. The main varna is in Kapi raga and the chittaswara (Ettugada) passages after the charana are in Kalyani, Khamas, Vasantha, Mohana and Kapi. It is significant that roopaka is also a rare tala for varna-s; it is usual for any musical piece in roopaka tala to have an even number of avartana-s. But in this varna, the Pallavi is in five avartana-s, and the charana is in three avartana-s.

Srinivasachariar of Nerur is a more recent musician whose compositions deserve to be known to a larger audience. He was the disciple of Pallavi Narasimha Iyengar and has published a book titled "Sree Ranga gana sudhodayam" which ran to a second edition in 1948. One of the persons who have contributed a foreword to this book is Ariyakudi Ramanuja Iyengar himself. The book contains quite a large number of kritis, varna-s, Ragamalika-s and the like. He has composed songs in praise of the Tiruvarur Trinity, Purandara-dasa and his own guru. He has used both Samskrit and Tamil in his compositions with good effect. He has a dasa ragamalika varna in Tamil set to Adi tala in which the raga names are also interwoven deftly. For example :—(Sadaabhogikkum), (Avanukkedaaram aavan). Pallavi is in Abhogi, the Anupallavi in Bhairavi, and Swara-s in Sankarabharana and Kalyani.

The charana is set in Kedara raga and the swara-s after it are in Kambhoji, Hamsa-dhwani, Bilahari, Poornachandrika and Sri.

## POETRY OR STANZAS SUNG AS RAGAMALIKA-S

Mahakavi Subrahmanya Bharati (1882-1921) composed a number of songs specifying the raga and tala also and sang them himself. One of them is "Dikku teriyaada kaattil" set to Adi tala in the raga Hindustani Todi. (Here, Bharatiyar adopts the Nayaka-Nayaki bhava in reverse! he takes Kannan as his lover!) It has 12 charanas or stanzas and GNB has immortalised this song by cutting a disc choosing only four stanzas and singing them in four different raga-s; there is also a background orchestra playing, which was rather rare for Karnataka music discs then.

### "Bhavayami"

Swati Tirunal sang a series of seven stanzas (one for each Kaandam of the epic) giving a summary of the Ramayana story. Saveri was the raga and roopaka was the tala specified by the author. But Semmangudi Srinivasa Iyer who has edited a large number of the Maharaja's compositions, recast it into a ragamalika with the following ragas:

Saveri, Natakuranji, Dhanyasi, Mohana, Mukhari, Poorvikalyani and Madhyamavati. He has added pleasing swara patterns at the end of each raga. After the Madhyamavati Swara, one has chittaswara-s in the viloma pattern (reversed order) coming back to Saveri and the pallavi.



Arunachala Kavirayar's Rama Natakam contains an introductory song "Enakkunnirupadam" set in Sowrashtira raga. Later, it has been rendered as a ragamalika by musicians and dancers. Mention may be made of the disc cut by Vasanthakokilam.

"Jayajayagokulabala" is a Tarangam forming part of the compositions of Yati Narayana Theertha and is in Sanskrit. It is set to Roopaka tala. Tiruvottiyur Thyagier set it as a ragamalika in five ragas viz.—Bhairavi, Athana, Kambhoji, Kalyani and Surati. There are Chittaswara-s at the end of each raga; with the last Charana Swara-s, there are swara-s in Bhairavi coming back to "Jayajaya gokula".

Ramalingaswamy's arutpa-s have also been set to a Ragamalika. For example "தண்மதி (Tanmadi)" in the ragas-Sindhubhairavi, Darbar, Chenchurutti and Punnagavarali.

In the earlier part of this article, some other references have already been given.

Ragamalika-s with merely the raga names strung together with a few connectives have also become popular in recent years. The "Maargadarshi" for this might be said to be Kunrakkudi Krishna Iyer (1816-1889) who was a Samasthana Vidwan of Ramanathapuram Court. He was the first to suggest the possibility of constructing a Pallavi ragamalika. The words are:—

Sankaraabharananai—  
Azhait thodi—  
Vaadi Kalyani—  
Darbaarukku—

Note that the raga names are merely 'joined' together by a few connectives to give some meaning to the Sahitya. The author was known by the pedantic and onomatopoeically long name of "Murukku Meesai jigibigi ghana-naya-desya-rattai pallavi Krishna Iyer". Ariyakkudi Ramanuja Iyengar of yesteryears popularised this Pallavi again; later a disc on this was cut by Ananthalakshmi Satagopan.

In recent years Maharajapuram Santhanam has been singing another ragamalika in which too the same pattern is followed - "Saarangamarugane, Saveri baalane". Apart from the raga names, there is very little of sahitya and no swara passages either.

#### SONGS COMPOSED AS RAGAMALIKAS

Melattur Veerabhadraiah who lived in the first half of the eighteenth century might be said to be one of the earlier, if not the earliest, of composers of "garlands of melodies." He taught Ramaswamy Deekshitar, the father of Muthuswamy Deekshitar. Two ragamalika-s are ascribed to him - "Naa Mohananguni" in Telugu in the raga-s Mohana, Todi, Varali, Huseni, Nata and Kannada; there are chittaswara-s at the end of each raga also. The names of ragas also form part of the sahitya. The second is "Ninnukori", a pancharagamalika in the five raga-s Saranga, Kalyani, Bhairavi, Saveri and Bilahari. Chittaswara-s and raga names are found.

#### RAGAMALIKA-S OF DEEKSHITAR'S FAMILY

It is, therefore, not surprising that Ramaswamy Deekshitar and his sons,

grandsons etc. composed a number of may not be fully exhaustive, but it is a regamalika-s of their own. The following fairly long list:

#### Ramaswamy Deekshitar

First words	Language	Tala	Raga-names	Ragamudra
1. Manasaaveri	Telugu	Roopak	48 ragas	Yes
2. Naatakaadi Vidya	Telugu	Five	61 ragas	No
3. Sivamohana Sakti	Telugu	Adi	38 raga-s	—
4. Saamajagamini	Telugu	Adi	20 raga-s	

The five tala-s mentioned in "Natakadi Vidya" are ; Lali, Srimadkeerti, Akshara, Kala, Sree—the Anga-s are not known. It is in praise of Venkatakrishna Mudaliar (or Chinnaswami Mudaliar) of Manali who was his patron. It is supposed to have 108 ragas, but only 61 of them have been published in the Sangita Sampradaya Pradarsini. (SSP)

#### \* Muthuswamy Deekshitar

1. Madhavo Maampaatu	Sanskrit	Roopaka	10 raga-s	No
2. Poornachandra	Sanskrit	Roopaka	6 raga-s	No
3. Simhasanastitha	Sanskrit	Roopaka	4 raga-s	Yes
4. Sri Viswanatham	Sanskrit	Roopaka	14 raga-s	Yes

[It is a dasavatara ragamalika on the ten-incarnations of Vishnu]

#### Subbarama Deekshitar

1. Eh, Kanakambari - Telugu Adi-72 - (Pallavi and Anupallavi are in the ragas of the first chakra and the ragas in the remaining 11 chakras are for the same number of charana-s. The words are by Krishna Kavi, the Telugu master of Subbarama Deekshitar)
2. Endukurara—Telugu - Roopaka - 9  
(In honour of Muttukumaraswami Ettappa)
3. Garavamu ganna - Telugu - Roopaka - 9  
(On Kartikeya and in honour of the Raja of Ramnad)
4. Kaminchinavari - Telugu - Tirsa Eke - 32  
(On Lord Parthasarathy and in honour of Ananda Gajapathi raju of Vizianagaram)

\* For fuller details of these, see Reference 3



5. Manadodinangina - Tamil - Adi - 6

(The only Ragamalika composed in the Tamil Language by this author. It is on Kandaperumal of Kazhugumalai)

6. Nee Sarilerani - Telugu - 9

(On Lord Padmanabha and in honour of Srirama Varma Kulasekhara raja of Travancore)

7. Priyamu Nayamekori - Telugu - Tisra Eka - 10

(In praise of Venkatagiri raja)

8. Sri Yamuna - Telugu - Eka - 9

9. Sri Ganalola - Telugu - Roopaka - 9

10. Valapumiri - Telugu - Roopaka - 4

(In praise of Lord Sri Ramachandra)

11. Vedukato - Telugu - Roopaka - 5

**Swati Tirunal, Contributions**

Mention has already been made of Swarajati's, Varnam-s and poems in various raga-s composed by this prolific Maharaja. In this section we deal only with those compositions which he meant to be ragamalika-s.

1. "Kamalajasya"

This is a ragamalika extolling the ten incarnations of Lord Vishnu. True to his Vaishnavite leanings. Swati Tirunal includes the Balarama Avatara and excludes the Buddha. Following the Kathakali tradition (in which 'rowdra' and 'Veera' rasas are depicted by Saranga raga) he has allotted Saranga raga for the passage dealing with the Narasimha Avatara. Each section, called a Khandikai, has four avartana-s each for the swara and sahitya, the second swara being always in the Madhyamakala. The second half of the last swara avartana is always in Mohana so that one comes back to the first part Kamalajasya. In the last section, there are four more avartana-s, to allow for the viloma passages in all the raga-s. The tala is Roopaka and the raga-s in order are:—Mohana, Bilahari

Dhanyasi, Saranga, Madhyamavati, Athana, Natakuranji, Darbar, Anandabhairavi and Sowrashters.

Some rare prayogas like 'Sani sa dha' in Atana, 'ma-pa-dha-ni-pa' in Darbar, 'pa-ga-ri-sa' in Dhanyasi are worthy of note; also the absence of panchama in the Natakuranji passage.

2. "Pannagendra Sayana"

A nayika addresses Lord Padmanabha depicting her diverse emotions through the eight parts of a night. The tala is rupaka. the language is Sanskrit. Appropriately, it begins with Sankarabharana (raga suitable for sunset) and ends in Bhoopala (an early morning raga). In between we find Kam-bhoji, Neelambari, Bhairavi, Todi, Surati and Nadanamakriya. The pattern of composition is similar to the earlier, but each

section is longer with sixteen avartana-s; one comes back again after each section to Sankarabharanam and there are the usual swara-passages in the reverse order after the last section. This is considered to be one of the best of the Maharaja's compositions.

3. "Pannagaadreesa"

The musical dhaatu is the same as the previous one, but the words are in Telugu. Authorship is unknown but some ascribe it to Vadivelu. Chittaswara-s have been provided with Sahitya - including the Viloma cycle. The names of the raga-s are deftly woven into the text, "Aa hari naakshi (Ahiri), and "... danipai ravisekalavale" (Bhairavi). But one change has been that Ahiri has been substituted for Nadanamakriya as the penultimate raga. This may be due to the fact that there is a feeling among some that Ahiri raga should not be sung in the mornings. Since this ragamalika was sung by people immediately after getting up in the mornings as part of their devotional offering to God, the necessity for a change arose perhaps.

Bhoopala is referred to in the sahitya as 'Bibhasu'. This is a Hindustani raga similar to Bhoopala with antaragandhara (according to Prof Sambamurthy). According to Subba Rao's "Raganidhi", Bibhasu in Karnataka music is an audava raga with Suddha R, Antara G, Suddha M, and Suddha D. It is uncommon in South India as there are no compositions in this; the aroha sounds like Revagupti and the avaroha like Saveri without ga and ni.

There are two more compositions: one is "Kalyani Khalu" also in roopaka tala

containing Kalyani, Mohana, Saranga, and Sankarabharana raga-s. The second is in Adi tala with the the raga-s: Kamalamanohari, Hamasadhwani, Revagupti, Tarangini - and beginning with the words 'Saanandam'. Samskrit is the language of both.

**Others**

SAHAJI (1684-1712) was a ruler of Tanjavur during whose time many a composer and literary figure flourished. He himself was also a poet and has composed quite a few works in various languages including Marathi. There are two ragamalika-s ascribed to him, one in Samskrit and the other in Marathi! The former he called as "Chaturdasa Bhuvanaanuraga ragamalika daru" in fourteen ragas, with each line of the sahitya in a separate raga. The latter is a sapta saagara soolaadi prabandha leela daru in the following raga-s; Gowla, Narayanagowla, Kannada, Malava Gowla, Purvagowla, Chayagowala, and Kedara. The raga names are also woven into the text.

Mahavaidyanatha Iyer is also known to have a Ragamalika with the words 'Pranatatihara' in Sanskrit, set to Adi tala. Patnam Subramania Iyer, apart from the varnam quoted earlier, has 'Sreegaanalola' in Telugu language and in roopaka tala.

Manambuchavadi Venkatasubbier's "Aparopa raga chatustaya ragamalika" (in four ragas and desadi tala) and "Kabhimanamu" in 9 raga-s; Tarangampadi Panchanada Iyer's "Arabhimanam" in Adi tala with sixteen raga-s; Tiruvottiyur Tyagier's "Srirama paadamaa" in Aditala



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and sixteen ragas; Tirupathi Narayana-swami Nayudu's Navaratna ragamalika; Chinnikrishna dasa's "Amba ninnu nere" in nine ragas and roopaka tala; Todi Sitaramayya's "Nityakalyani" in eight raga-s are some of the other pieces that were popular at one time or another. One Sarangapani appears to have composed a ragamalika Padam, but details are not available. Nagarjarao has a Lavani in Adi tala in five raga-s beginning with "Bhupattisri Sivendra". Poochi Srinivasa Iyengar of Ramanathapuram has to his credit a ragamalika in nine raga-s but full of Srangaara rasa. It contains Sarasangi, Saveri, Navaroj, Lalita, Varali, Arabhi, Bowli and Sree raga-s and is in Roopaka tala. Some of the raga names have been adroitly woven into the Telugu text - for example : *Manasaarapiluva* (Aarabhi), *navaroju ninnu koniyaadura* (Navaroj).

### MYSORE COMPOSERS

From the beginning of the nineteenth century, when Mummadi Krishnaraja Wodeyar was ruling, upto the middle of the twentieth century when Jayachamaraja Wodeyar became Rajpramukh after the merger of states, Mysore has continued as a seat of patronage for literature and fine arts. Many a literary figure, musician and dancer of note lived during this golden era of patronage; many scholars and musicians were invited to come over to the palace to be honoured by the raja-s and the public. The rulers themselves were good scholars and the last of them, Jayachamaraja Wodeyar, has quite a few compositions to his credit, apart from his other literary works on art and aesthetics. But he has not composed any ragamalika.

However there have been many other composers who have given us examples of

this type of musical piece. They were composed on various occasions and mention should be made of some of them. Karigiri Rao immortalised the occasion of the wedding of Yuvaraja Kanthirava Narasimha Raja Wodeyar (father of Jayachamaraja Wodeyar) in 1910 which won him praise at the court. Jalatharangam Appadurai Ayyangar composed one in nine raga-s in Tamil. Veena Subbanna's (1854-1939) piece is "Paripaalari Sri Chamundeswari" in twelve raga-s among which are - Saveri, Sankarabharana, panjaram, Nadabrahma. This has been Published by the Music Academy, Madras in 1972. There are Chittaswara-s at the end of each section.

Veena Sivaramaiah (1886-1946) also has composed a song "Saraswati nada vidya swaroopini" in 10 khandika-s. There are Chittaswara-s for each raga and viloma swara-s at the end. Some rare raga-s (Balachandrika and Kokila Bhashini) are also used. The time measure is Chaturasra Triputa tala.

Veena Venkatagiriappa (1887-1954) is the author of a ragamalika, besides a few poems which have been later converted to ragamalika-s. The nonegenarian Vasudeva-char (1865-1961) who has been quite a prolific composer of more than two hundred compositions, has a few ragamalika-s to his credit. He has also completed a raga-tala-malika containing all the thirtyfive Suladitala-s. He has authored a book called "Navaratna ragamalika" (Pub Kalakshetra, Adyar) in which for five of the pieces, both the Dhatu (Swara-s) and the Mattu (Sahitya) were provided by him. Bidaram Krishnappa (1866-1931) better known as the guru of Mysore Chowdaiah



has composed two and Harikesanallur Muthia Bhagavata (1877-1945) has composed three regamalika-s. Out of the latter, one atleast deserves special mention because it is on the 'Nava-avarana-s'. This is a regamalika in Eleven raga-s; the first is a Ganesa Stuthi, followed by the nava-avarana descriptions (containing the name of each) and there is a mangalam portion at the end. Another Mysorean R.N. Dareswamy has also composed a ragamālika, besides many other songs.

### TAMIL COMPOSITIONS

Reference has already been made to some instances wherein poems or stanzas have been sung as Ragamalikas, even though the original poet did not mean them to be so. To that list might be added a few of the ragamalika-s ascribed to Mahakavi Subramania Bharati. If at all one could say that this Kavi (a composer\* too, of no mean merit!) composed a ragamalika, one can refer to the song "Moonnu Kaadal" in which he pays obeisance to the trinity of Devi-s - Saraswathi, Lakshmi and Kali, in three raga-s, aptly chosen! - Saraswati Manohari, Sree and Punnagavarali.

Some of the 'modern' composers in Tamil have composed songs as ragamalikas and mention could be made of the following: Ambujam Krishna, Bharatidasar, Neelakantasivan, Lalitadasar, Guhan, Neelaramaswamy, Papanasam Sivan, Ramalingaswami and Periasamy Thooran. Tiruvarur Karunaiyananda Jnana Bhoopathyar has a Ragamalika with words "Naada Sangeetha Ponmanimandapa" in six ragas. Another which is popular is "Srichakraraja"

in the ragas Chenchuruti, Punnagavarali, Nadanamakriya and Sindhubhairavi; the Text is by Agatheiyar.

### THOSE WHO DID NOT COMPOSE RAGAMALIKA-S

It is not as if all well-known Vaggeyakara-s have been composers of ragamalika-s. Among the Trinity, both Sri Tyagaraja and Syama Sastri have sung none. The earlier poets and composers too have not composed ragamalika-s. As has been pointed out, the guru of Ramaswamy Deekshitar could be said to be the first to initiate compositions of this genre. Hence, Purandaradasa, or Oothukkadu and such earlier Vaggeyakara-s have no ragamalika-s in their outpourings. Some of their verses might have been later 'set' in the form of ragamalika-s. Among composers in recent times also, many have no contributions in this regard. Mention could be made of a few of them - GNB, Balamuralikrishna, Chowdayya, and Jayachamaraja Wodeyar already referred to.

### CONCLUSION

It is evident that properly handled and sung, a ragamalika would be more attractive and captivating than a mere song in one raga especially when the composition is a long one. The listener would certainly welcome shifts from one raga to another in fairly quick succession. The additional trimmings of Chittaswara-s captivatingly arranged at the end of each section of the ragamalika adds further charm, with the percussionist quite easily following the jati-s of the swara-s with his own rhythmic beatings on his drum! It is better that some of these ragamalika-s by great composers are sung as part of a concert, perhaps to-

wards the end, instead of the so-called ragamalika slokam or viruttam in which the raga chosen depends on the caprices of the singer. Moreover, in singing the words the artiste is rarely able to capture the full

beauty of the raga and often has to resort to a ta-ra-na-na to delineate the raga, the violinist doing a more elaborate raga rendering later.

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## Sri Venkatamakhi's Great Contribution to Carnatic Music

By

Sangeetha Choodamani R. VEDAVALLI.

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Sri Venkatamakhi created a revolution in Carnatic music in the 17th Century with his monumental work "Chathurdandi Prakasika", in which he introduced the famous 72 Mela Karta Scheme.

Also known as Venkateswara Dikshitar, he was the son of Govinda Dikshitar who was a Minister to Achutha Naicker, the Ruler of the Tanjore samasthanam. Govinda Dikshitar was a genius in all arts and sciences, including music.

Govinda Dikshitar, it is said, belonged to the Hoysala Karnataka Saivite Brahmin community. It is also believed that Savithri Devi gave "dharshan" to him as a culmination of his Gayatri Upasana. Govinda Dikshitar reportedly visited many centres between Vridachallam and Rameswaram Sethu; and with the permission of Achutha Naicker, built temples and Veda Patasalas in all the places he visited.

A description of Achutha Naicker and Govinda Dikshitar runs as "Trinama-Adhyanta Namanou mahikshit Dikshita vubhow sastre-saastrecha kusaolu aahaves-huhavesu cha". This means that the names of Achutha Naicker and Govinda Dikshitar

were formed out of the three names of Lord Narayana - Achutha, Anantha, Govinda - the first to the Ruler and the third to Dikshitar. Achutha Naicker was a genius in Sastra and Yuddha while Govinda Dikshitar was master of Saastra and Yoga.

It seems Govinda Dikshitar and Appayya Dikshitar were contemporaries. Neelakanta Dikshitar who was a disciple of Venkatamakhi, had mentioned in his Kavya "Gangavatharnam" that Raghunatha Naicker shared his throne with Govinda Dikshitar and conferred on him the honorary title "Maharaja". Govinda Dikshitar and his wife Nagamba had two sons: the elder was Yegna Narayana Dikshitar and the younger Venkatamakhi. Raghunatha Naicker, third in the Naik's dynasty, was crowned as the Ruler in 1614 A.D. He was very famous and mastered many arts. He appointed Govinda Dikshitar as his Minister. Govinda Dikshitar, as a master of music, wrote a book "Sangitha Sudhanidhi" the name of the ruler Raghunatha Naicker. This information is contained in the Chathurdandi Prakasika of Venkatamakhi in the Vinna Prakarana as below.—



“Tallaksha nantu Sangitha Sudhani-  
dhi Pradrusyate  
“Sevvaychyuta Bhoopala Raghunatha  
Nrupangite  
“Asmat tata Krute Grante  
“Proktan slokan likhamitaan”

The lakshana grantha “Sangita Sudha” was first published by the Madras Music Academy in 1940 as the first of a series. In this book, a small note is given that Raghunatha Naicker discovered the raga called “Jayanthasena” and also a rare Tala. Venkatamakhi, the second son of Govinda Dikshitar, learnt many Sastras from his elder brother Yagna narayana Dikshitar and music from his father, Venkatamakhi who ought to have been christened “Sarva Thanthara Swathantra” was the Guru to the great intellectuals, Neelakanta Dikshitar and Raja Choodamani Dikshitar.

Of the works of Venkatamakhi, three must be specially mentioned: “Bodaayana Sroutha Sutha Vyagyanam” and “Tuptika Vyakyanam” and “Varthikabaranam Sahitya Samrajyam”. But it is his creation “Chathurdandi Prakasika” which is known to everyone as an incomparable work on music. Sri Venkatamakhi learnt perfectly both the aspects of music viz; ‘Lakshya’ and ‘Lakshana’ from the musicologist Thanappa Charya, who came from North India and who became Venkatamakhi’s Acharya. That Tanappa Charya was the son of Honnayya and was also called Venkata Manthri is evident from the third part of the Geetham “Ghandharva Jana Thakya” in Arabi Raga composed by Venkatamakhi. Venkatamakhi has saluted Tanappa Charya, his Guru, at four places in his Chathurdandi Prakasikha.

As the ragas mentioned in “Sangitha Ratnakaram” were not in vogue in his time, Venkatamakhi had mentioned the ragas revived by Tanappa Charya. In the Alapa Prakaranam of his Chathurdandi Prakasika, Venkatamakhi has mentioned the fifty ragas created by Tanappa Charya and also added that Tanappa Charya had composed Tayams for the ragas. It is evident from these that Tanappa Charya was an undisputed master in the lakshana and lakshya aspects of music.

After Raghunatha Naicker, his son Vijayaraghava Naicker, came to the throne. He had also mastered all the arts. It was only through his help and inducement Venkatamakhi created the 72 Melakarta scheme, and with Geetham, Thayam, Prabhandam and Alapa as four pillars, he created the Chathurdandi Prakasika. He has stressed this point at the end of each and every Prakaranam.

It is said that Vijayaraghava Naicker had composed some Githams and Prabhandams. It was only during his regime that Kshetragna, a Telugu Pandit, settled in Tanjore for a pretty long time and composed thousands of the immortal padams for which he is now so famous.

Based on the Kavyas of Geetha Govindam composed by Jayadeva, it is said that Venkatamakhi produced 64 Ashtapathis on Lord Thyagarajaswami who is the presiding Deity of Thiruvavur. These Ashtapathis are not available now. In the monumental work of Subbarama Dikshitar “Sangitha Sampradhaya Pradharsini”, it can be seen that every raga in that magnum opus contains Venkatmakhi’s lakshna-

sloka and lakshya geetham. But it cannot be said for certain that all the Lakshya geethams were authored by Venkatamakhi as, in some geethams, the Mudras-Muddu-Venkatamakhi, Venkata Vaidhyananatha-are met with. A plausible surmise is that these persons must have been Venkatamakhi’s close relatives. This was in fact the view of Subbarama Dikshitar. Moreover, it is known that Ramaswamy Dikshitar, father of Muthusamy Dikshitar, learnt Veena at Thiruvaidaimarudur from Venkata Vaidyanatha Dikshitar who was the grandson of Venkatamakhi on his mother’s side, and learnt everything that could be had from Chathurdandi Prakasika. The information was furnished by Subbarama Dikshitar. According to the Pradarsini Ramaswamy Dikshitar got a copy of Chathurdandi Prakasika at Manali from Govinda Dikshitar, the great-grandson of Venkatamakhi.

Venkatamakhi had not given the names of all the 72 Melas in his Melakarta Scheme. Hence the Geethams seen in every raga in Sampradhaya Pradharsani could not naturally have been his. In 25 Geethams, Venkatamakhi’s mudra and the names of his parents are seen and as such it could be safely inferred that these 25 geethams were Venkatamakhi’s compositions. The names of these ragas are found in the Chathurdandi Prakasika. In the lakshya geethams found in the Chathurdandi Prakasika, Venkatamakhi had paid high and reverential tributes to his parents, and in the same spirit, has mentioned that his father was unrivalled in propagating the Adhvaita philosophy of Adi Sankara. Certain compositions could be cited in support

of this contention. In his Uma Tilaka Prabandham on Chidambaram, Venkatamakhi has said in Mecha Bowli Raga.—

“Tille Vana kalithaa vaasa Chidam-  
baresa

“Govinda Makhi Nagambika Sutha  
Venkatadhvari

“Rachinalle medhini Jathi Vanda biru-  
danga

“Uma Tilaka Prabhandu”.

It would be seen here that Chidambaram is called ‘Thillai’ as in Tamil language. Mecha Bowli Raga is the Janya of 15th Melakarta Raga, Mayamalavagowla. Sa, ri, ga, pa, da, sa - sa, ni, da, pa, maa, gha ri, sa are the Arohana and Avarohana swaras. This is also called Gumma Kambhodi. The difference between the two Bowlis, is that Mecha Bowli has Madhyama and there is no Madhyama in Bowli. The Mecha Bowli prabhandam is in Tiruputa Thala.

In Venkatamakhi’s Chathurdandi Prakasika, Prabhandam Prakaranam is the biggest. He has elaborately explained many prabandhas in the language called “Bandeera Basha” in Prakriti language.

“Ashta Basha Padairyuktam Aayayaa  
aamvoth thi yairyutham

“Swara Ragai pragayanthi Geethamapi  
abhidheeyate”.

The meaning of this sloka is; The ‘Mathus’ (Sahityas) in geethams are prakritam etc., based on the words of Sanskrit language and also in Mathus in



Aboga kadam, like sound without any meaning eg, Ah, Ayya, Thiyya, Amvo, Iya, Arhe. For example, the word 'Tenaka' is the Bhandira Basha Vikruti of the word Tena as per Venkatamakhi.

"Tenaka naama Tenethi sabdasya vikritir bhavet

"Vikrutatvam cha bhandeera bhashayaa asya Samgatam"

There is a Vyakaranam for Bhandeera basha. One Visweswara, *alias* Vagisar, has written a grammar for this Bhandeera Basha. In this, it is said that when Lord Krishna played on his flute, the words from languages in Kambhojam, Magadham, Kalingam came mixed up to form a separate language of music. This language had great support during the times of Bhoja and Someswara.

In the Mudra Kanda of Kaivara Prabhandha in Narayana Gowla raga, Venkatamakhi had along with his mudra, mentioned about his father Govinda Dikshitar being closely associated in propagating Advaita Siddhanta as below:-

"Sankara muni matha pradhishtavana kovidu

"Govindaathvari Nagambika suta

"Venkatamakhi chandrupari rachin nalle

"Kaivara Prabhandha mavadaraya."

Narayana Gowla Raga was once popular with the Arohana sa, ri, ma, pa, ni, da, ni, sa and Avarohana sa, ni, da, pa, ma, ga, ri, ga ri, sa, and in Matya Tala, which is one of the Saptha Talas. This Prabhandha is about Aravamudhazhwar in Kumba-

konam. It should be noted that Venkatamakhi had included in this prabhandha the name 'Abhayaptamruta' which the Vaishnavites use for Lord Sarangapani in Kumbakonam. The use of Tamil word 'Thillai' in another prabandha of Venkatamakhi has already been referred to.

To the innumerable ragas mentioned in the Sangitha Sampradaya pradharsini the Gitas of Venkatamakhi are a shining illustration. Muthuswami Dikshitar had adopted Venkatamakhi's system entirely to compose Kritis. Saint Thyagaraja composed his Kritis on the basis of the Lakshya githams found in "Sangraha Choodamani" of Govinda. We also come to know, from these Githas, about rare Talams like Dhruva, Roopakam, Matyam etc.

One of the pieces of great good fortune in my life is that, according to the wishes of Paramacharya of Kanchi, who extolled the beauty of the compositions, it was given to me to demonstrate some of the Prabhandas and Gitas of Venkatamakhi in the Annual Conference of the Madras Music Academy on 24th December 1983, after explaining the various components of a Prabhandha like Alapa Khanda and Javada. Again I had an opportunity to sing some of these compositions before the Paramacharya himself on 11th January 1987, when a booklet entitled the "Gitas and Prabhandas of Venkatamakhi", compiled and edited by Sri T. S. Parthasarathy was released by the Paramacharya, whose wish is that these compositions should be propagated by musicians singing at least one or two of them in their concerts.

## An Unique Camp for Natya Siksha

Patanjalipuri near Coimbatore is a sylvan village, situated at the foot of the Western ghats and abounding in woods and contains the campus of the Ayurveda College run by the Aryan Vaidyan Rania Varier Educational Foundation. On the morning of May 16, 87 the campus started humming like a beehive as the inaugural function of the Bharatiya Natya Sastra Siksha Camp, organized by the Director of the K. Subrahmanyam Memorial Trust, Madras, was held. The camp, the first of its kind in India, was inaugurated by Swami Dayananda Saraswati with Dr. Arudra, noted poet and scholar, presiding. In his illuminating address the Swami explained the noble heritage of Indian culture and how the dance tradition of India played an integral part of it. The function was followed by the presentation of the dance drama 'Gitanjali', specially choreographed by Padma Subrahmanyam for the 125th anniversary of Rabindranath Tagore celebrated earlier at New Delhi.

### Dr. Padma's Crusade

It is well-known that Dr. Padma has been crusading for more than two decades that the Natya Sastra of Bharata, which forms the basis for the different regional dance styles of today, should be given its rightful place in the field of Indian dancing. Her in-depth study of the treatise, for which she was awarded a Doctorate, has convinced her that the common root symbolising the genetic relationship between the apparently diverse dance styles and theatre

forms of India is the Natya Sastra. As the Director of 'Nrithyodaya', founded by her father, it has been her mission in life to reconstruct, both in practice and theory this common link which is a proof of the inherent cultural unity of our sub-continent.

### The Siksha Camp.

The camp was attended by 51 participants comprising young performers, teachers and research students drawn from Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Maharashtra and West Bengal, representing Bharata Natyam, Kuchipudi, Kathak, Mohini Attam, Manipuri and Odissi. The activities of the camp did not in any way interfere with the style followed by the participants but enabled them to identify their own styles in the Natya Sastra. Far from the madding crowd, the environment was most congenial to training being imparted on the Gurukula model.

Realising the all-comprehensive nature of Bharata's concept of Natya, Padma had thoughtfully included music, yoga, meditation and music by competent teachers. The main tool of a dancer is the body and Bharata lays stress on 'anga vyayama' or Calisthenics, in his work. When Vasudevan the Yoga teacher, taught them the asanas, the trainees realised how close they were to certain dance postures explained in the Natya Sastra. The Yoga and the meditation classes held in the early hours of the morning enabled the participants to concen-



rate on the other items of the syllabus to follow.

A basic knowledge of Sanskrit is a must for any one trying to understand Bharata's treatise and so, conversational Sanskrit, taught by Gita of the Samskrita Bhasha Pratishthan of Bangalore, was a boon to the camp. It was amazing how participants who were not acquainted with Sanskrit started speaking fluently within a few days.

### Theory Explained

The main lecturer on the theory part of the Natya Sastra was Sri K. D. Tripathy, distinguished savant and professor of Sanskrit at the Benares Hindu University. Sri Tripathy is, besides, an eminent theatre personality, director and actor and is presently editor-in-chief of a new edition of the Natya Sastra undertaken by the Kalidasa Academy, Ujjain. He gave a succinct summary of the Natya Sastra in ten lectures. This was supplemented by Dr. Padma Subrahmanyam through clarifications and practical demonstrations of the poses described.

### Free Exchanges of Ideas

The camp was not a 'workshop' in its limited scope but a free seminar in which the participants played the leading part. Each of them was asked to give a performance of dances choreographed by them in his or her own style. R. K. Simhajit Singh of the Triveni Kala Sangam, Delhi, gave a lecture demonstration on the Manipuri style of dance and although he maintained that the Manipuri tradition was totally different, it was found that no dance tradition in India could claim complete freedom from

the Natya Sastra. In fact, the only treatise on Manipuri dance unearthed so far, the 'Govinda Sangita Lila Vilasah' by ruler Bhagya Chandra of Manipur, (1764-1789) starts with an invocation to Adi Bharata and a great Manipuri scholar. Panditaraja Atombapu Sharma, had tried to interpret the classical Manipuri dance from the standpoint of the Natya Sastra. This spirit of relating or identifying different styles of Indian dance to the relevant portions of the Natya Sastra was one of the main triumphs of the Siksha camps conducted by Padma.

Dr. N. Ramanathan of the Music Department of the Madras University, gave lectures on Indian music as described by Bharata in his *Magnum opus* which is the earliest work to describe the subject. Prof. A. S. Gnanasambandam gave an illuminating lecture on the concept of Nataraja.

A devotional atmosphere, befitting a camp of this nature, was maintained throughout and each meal started with a Nama Sankirtanam in chorus. A dance drama, based on an imaginary meeting between Panini, the strict Sanskrit grammarian, and Bharata Muni, written in simple Sanskrit, was the highlight of the camp and this delightful play was enacted by all the 51 participants at the Valedictory Function held at the Nani auditorium at Coimbatore on May 31. The camp left an unforgettable impression on the minds of those who had the privilege of attending it although, deliberately, little publicity was given to it.

T. S. Parthasarathy.

## Sri Tyagaraja Temple in Tirupati

Not only at Aradhana time (Bahula Panchami) every January but throughout the year, Tyagaraja festivals have become increasingly popular throughout India. The Aradhana series is followed by a Ram Navami series and then a Gokulashtami series. Evidently organisers want just some sacred day to plan a festival of music! And what festival can really be more complete and satisfying to music lovers of every hue than one which features the immortal kritis of the bard of Tiruvaiyaru?

As stated in "Shammukha" years ago: "His Kritis reflect the essences of humanity - its aspirations, regrets, tenderness, spiritual exaltation and moods and therefore they become invested with a divine secondary colour derived from ourselves, Sri Thyagaraja is thus eternally relevant."

### Temples Galore for Tyagaraja

As was only to be expected, the popularity of Sri Tyagaraja's songs and the reverence for his sublime soul have spilled over into erection of temples for the saint. The learned pundits of Hindu sastra may be inclined to scoff at this idolatrous mode of worship of a sanyasi. But to the rasika as well as the sincere devotee of Ramana, the idol of Sri Tyagaraja is a concrete symbol and vehicle of a rare state of spiritual exaltation, perhaps not often experienced even in the other great and hoary temples of our land. Tyagaraja opens the doors of spiritual perception as few other composers can!



Idol of Tyagaraja

No one who has been present at the abishekam, aradhana and deeparadhana ceremonies performed annually at Tiruvaiyaru will ever forget the thrill and levitation that he or she experienced then. We do not bother to remind ourselves that he was a Sanyasin after all and according to sacred lore, only a "tulasi mata" need mark his final resting place. Few now consider it to be a sacrilege to erect a monument to him and to offer pujas from time to time to the idol, which the devout and but faithful spirit of Nagarathamma found fulfilment in completing.



It is perhaps in a similar spirit that the other great and utterly sincere disciple of Tyagaraja, the late Maharajapuram Viswanatha Iyer, felt impelled to gift an idol of the saint to the Tyagaraja Sangeetha Vidvat Samajam, at Mylapore. That temple has now become hallowed by all Vidvans who make their obeisance to their idol of music through music every year in a fitting manner, with unstinted public co-operation too!

A temple for Tyagaraja has thus become *de rigueur* wherever musicians and the public congregate. The saint has emerged from the two-dimensional world of portraiture (which has been the standard backdrop all these years at every celebration to that of three-dimensions! At least this much the generations of music lovers owe to that astounding musical genius whose soul-stirring music is yet to be fully and adequately fathomed, comprehended and rendered with complete fidelity.

#### Few Pilgrimages

Unlike Muthuswami Dikshitar who made it his life's mission to visit sacred shrines all over the South and compose pieces on each local deity, Tyagaraja's peregrinations were few, undertaken in his later years. However, in response to the importunities of his disciples or other sincere devotees, and presumably much against the grain of his own temperament, Sri Tyagaraja visited a few shrines and religious centres in the Tamil country and composed immortal kritis reflecting their spiritual impact upon him - e.g. the Pancharatnam at Lalgudi, Sri Rangan, Kovur, Tiruvotthiyur, all of them divinely inspired and uplifting. They support the thesis that "A musician's inner inspiration always adapts

to the outer terms of reference and his music is a personal expression of feeling and sensibility in terms of melody and musical diction that ordinary people can follow. He makes music lovers identify with his mind processes and let them enjoy the vicarious satisfaction of creation". All these apply *a fortiori* to Tyagaraja, with his largeness of comprehension of musical and philosophical values.

#### At Balaji's Feet.

Tirupathi, the abode of Lord Venkateswara - Balaji, as known in North India, is the only "punyakshetram" in Andhra Pradesh which the saint composer had visited during his life time. The two songs composed by Tyagaraja in praise of the Lord of the Seven Hills are popular with all artistes.

#### Sri Thyagaraja Trust

It was therefore a happy idea of the Sri Thyagaraja Trust, founded more than 40 years back, to instal an idol of the saint in the Trust premises at Tirupathi. As a result of the good offices of the Executive Officer, Sri S. Lakshminarayana, I.A.S., the TT Devasthanams donated an idol of the saint, to the local Trust. Having secured the idol, the Trust embarked upon a novel method to raise funds to meet the expenses of the installation, by making an appeal to all votaries of music and devotees of Lord Rama to write in a prescribed format the sacred Rama Nama 1008 times. In this way, they were able to collect 10,000 forms containing a crore of Rama Nama. This was placed beneath the pedestal of the idol of Tyagaraja. Along with the above they also collected Rs. 10/- from each devotee to net an income of about a lakh of rupees.

#### Sri Thyagarajaswami Temple Etc. Building Trust

The Trust has, as its Present Chairman, Sri K. V. Subramaniam, a reputed and popular teacher of Tirupathi and one of the earliest recipients of the President's Award for teachers. Sri Subramaniam hails from a musical family of Tirupathi Narayanaswami Naidu (the composer of the Kirti "Ikanaina" in Pushpaithika raga) and which has a long and intimate association since inception. He has been rendering dedicated service to the cause of music at Tirupathi and inspiring the younger members of the team.

The Trust luckily has a pucca building of its own in an area of nearly an acre in the heart of Tirupathi—again, a donation freely given by one of the Archanam Mirasdars of Lord Venkateswara's temple. The Trust had in its initial years the stewardship of the late Sangitha Kalanidhi Chittoor Subramaniya Pillai, the great disciple of the illustrious Kancheepuram (Naina) Subramanya Pillai. Sri Chittoor's Contribution to the increasing popularity of the Trust is gratefully remembered by the members of the Trust and the local public.

#### Grand Installation

The Trust recently celebrated the installation ceremony of Tyagaraja idol on a grand scale from 15th to 18th April 1987. The idol was taken around the streets of Tirupathi on the 15th of April and elaborate vedic rituals were performed on the 16th and 17th April before the idol was finally consecrated on the 18th April in the presence of a huge gathering of devotees and rasikas. From 9 a.m. on the 18th

April, non-stop rendering of Tyagaraja Kritis took place, in which artistes from Vizag, Vijayawada, Hyderabad and Madras participated. As a grand finale, there was 'goshtigana' of the famous Pancharathna kritis of Tyagaraja, led by none other than the grand old man of Carnatic music Dr. Semmangudi Srinivasa Iyer.

#### Dr. V. Subramanian's inspiring Address

On the same day, the 42nd annual festival of music and dance was inaugurated by the Hon. Dr. V. Subramanian, Minister of Housing of Maharashtra State and President of the incomparable Shunmukananda Fine Arts and Sangeetha Sabha, Bombay. The eloquent and inspiring address of Dr. Subramanian, full of great ideas, was a thrilling experience to all those who listened to him that day. Sri T. T. Vasu, President of the Music Academy, Madras, who presided, warmly commended the efforts of the Trust for promotion of classical music.

#### Neduneri Honoured

On the 19th April, one of the veteran vocalists of today and recipient of the award of the Sangeetha Nataka Akadamy, Sri Neduneri Krishnamurthi, was honoured with the title of "Sapthagiri Sangeetha Vidwa Mani". The Trust has so far conferred this title on Chittoor Subramania Pillai, Vidyala Narasimha Naidu, Chembai, Semmangudi, M. S. Subbalakshmi, D. K. Pattammal, M. L. Vasanthakumari, Dr. Pinakapani, Emani Sankara Sastri and others. Smt. Akhila Sivaraman, Director of the Madras Doordarshan Kendra, conferred the title and in her speech



referred to the great contribution of the Andhra artistes to the enrichment of Carnatic music.

The festival lasted for 5 days. The Trust had imaginatively arranged lecture demonstrations also in the morning sessions. Savants like Dr. R. Krishnaswamy, Sri I. Kamesvara Rao of Nellore, and Dr. Brahmananda Sastry of Tenali, delivered thought-provoking lectures. There was a special programme of Jawalis and Padams by the veteran Smt. T. Muktha assisted by Smt. Nirmala Sundararajan.

#### Bright Future

The Secretary of the trust, Sri M. Krishnaswamy, has drawn up an ambitious plan for activating the Trust. A library of

tapes of eminent artistes, publication of a music journal from Tirupathi, arranging a dance festival every year, celebration of the jayanthis of composers besides the Trinity etc are some of the programmes being implemented. "M. K." has the ambition to make Tirupathi the Tiruvaiyaru of Andhra Pradesh and judging by the enthusiastic public response to the installation of the idol of Sri Tyagaraja, the fanfare attending this year's festival and his reputed dedication to tasks undertaken, Sri Krishnaswamy seems certain to succeed in his noble endeavours. The public not only of A.P. but the whole of India will wish him god-speed.

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## The Halo Around Palghat Mani Iyer

The disciples of the late Palghat Mani Iyer, the mridangam colossus of yesteryears, faithfully observe the anniversary of his demise, 30th May, year after year at Palghat, while the Trusts set up in his name celebrate his birth anniversary (10th June) at Madras. Other centres at Bangalore also give suitable expression to their appreciation of him. There is no dearth of top class mridangam vidvans in Karnataka music today and the average, too, is pretty good. But none of them has come anywhere near the dazzling eminence of Mani Iyer; and even when they play well, old rasikas often cannot help reflecting on how much more brilliantly Mani Iyer would have handled the same situation.

Of course, this difference is just what genius is all about—because "a genius himself discovers the laws that govern the construction of his art.....and requires to master a certain amount of form and only as much tradition as will cultivate his particular garden" (Neville Cardus). This is very relevant to an understanding of Mani Iyer's excellence.

Mani Iyer's forte lay, broadly, in creating vast dimensions and investing rhythm, at appropriate moments, with an athletic sense of movement at one time, a reposeful gait at another and, in his speciality of joining the music or effecting pauses in his playing, to highlight the kriti or music.

He above all knew the sound of silence. Those light and shade effects compelled the admiration of both the performer and

the listener. He proved that rhythm also contains great scope for displaying the inventive power of a creative intelligence—a divine faculty—and that the mridangam was also an apt medium for its expression. Earlier, Pudukkottai Dakshinamurthy Pillai had shown the way by introducing "lakshya" in an art that in his time was impaled mainly on lakshana and dry arithmetic. Mani Iyer, till his last breath, acknowledged the debt he owed to Dakshinamurthy Pillai in this respect.

Mani Iyer had a compact mind of terrific tidiness encased in aesthetics, along with a highly developed instinct of self-preservation.

He could stun the professional with the depth and intricacy of his rhythmic cosmology; or sway the layman with his instinct for the sheerly beautiful; overall, the manner of his playing for kriti, nerval, swara and pallavi, amounted to a thrilling musical discourse with the main performer on the one hand and the audience on the other—no mean achievement.

The whole edifice of his art was founded on an immaculate judgement of what precisely to do, how, and when, on the mridangam. In this context, La Rochefoucauld's dictum "Judgement is only the extent of the mind's illumination" comes to one's mind. R.W.S. Mendl said "The conditions of the age influence the artistic creator, but it is the geniuses that mould the epoch". As a genius of unquestionable calibre, Mani Iyer did mould his epoch.

K. S. MAHADEVAN



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**“Jagadanandakaraka” (Nata)**

*(A Critical Study with Special reference to the Charanas)*

By

**P. K. SRINIVASAN, B.Sc.,**

**PART I**

**Ganaraga Panchakam**

Nata is the first raga of the Ghanaraga Panchakam, the other four being, Gowla, Arabhi, Varali and Sriraga. ‘Adhi Nata-anthya surati’ (starting Nata and ending with Surati) is a proverbial saying emphasising the importance of Nata raga as the starting one. It was the practice of vainikas to play thanam in these five ghana ragas during their concert, usually at the end of the central alapana raga taken up for that day for elaboration. Apart from this, there is another set of five ragas, called “Dvitheeya ghana raga panchakam” consisting of Kedaram, Narayanagowla, Riti-gowla, Saranganata and Bowli, but this set is not so popular as the first one since probably there is not much scope for elaboration, except perhaps in the case of Narayanagowla.

**Pancharatna Kritis of Sri Thyagaraja**

Sri Thyagaraja has composed five lengthy songs consisting of about ten charanas in each of these ghana ragas. The music portions for the charanas are different, most artistically set with respect to tala, having much aesthetic appeal and sparkling with beautiful phrases of musical notes. All are set in Adhi tala.

*The five Kritis are:*

- |                            |             |
|----------------------------|-------------|
| 1. “Jagadanandakaraka”     | Nata raga   |
| 2. “Dhudugalanan”          | Gowla raga  |
| 3. “Sadinchane oh manasa”  | Arabhi raga |
| 4. “Kana kana ruchira”     | Varali raga |
| 5. “Endharo mahanubhavulu” | Sri raga    |

In this article the Nata piece has been taken up for a detailed analysis.

**Nata Raga Pancharatna Kriti**

“Jagadanandakaraka” is the first piece that is always sung in this Pancharatna group. This has ten charanas after the anupallavi. The pallavi portion is repeated after each charana and this scheme is followed in all the songs except in the case of the Arabhi song. Even here, there is room for a rethinking to sing the pallavi portion of ‘Sadinchane oh manasa’ instead of the present one of “Samayaniki thagu mataladane” with some points in favour of it. This however will not be discussed here as it will form a separate subject.

**Jagadanandakaraka—Prominent features**

This song of Sri Thyagaraja is unique with none even remotely second to it so far in spite of many good composers (vaaggeyakaras) of the post-Thyagaraja period, having



to their credit a good number of compositions of a high order. This song which is in Sanskrit has no verb at all—but contains the distinguished names of the Lord in vocative case i.e., Sambhodana Pratama Vibhakthi. The Pallavi portion contains two names, anupallavi six names and the ten charanas having seventy-eight names of Vishnu in his different forms but mainly Rama and Krishnā. Being a musical composition, the pallavi has to be repeated after anupallavi and then after each charana. Thus, these two names are uttered repeatedly in this process. The net result, when this song is sung once, is that a total of one hundred and eight names are uttered, i.e., an Ashtothra Satanamavali in a musical composition which therefore makes it a unique one.

Apart from this, the thambura sruthi notes of Sa-Pa-Sa only are used as the starting notes for pallavi, anupallavi and all the ten charanas. Another important feature in this song is that there are four Thyagaraja mudras equally spaced, with the last one as usual in the end-charana.

#### The Order of Charanas—Current Version

The order of the ten charanas as is now sung generally by most singers and available in print is as given below (opening words):

- |                      |                    |
|----------------------|--------------------|
| 1. Amaratharaka      | 6. Sajjana manasa  |
| 2. Nigama Niraja     | 7. Omkara panjara  |
| 3. Indra Neela mani  | 8. Karadritha sara |
| 4. Padavijitha mowni | 9. Purana purusha  |
| 5. Srististhith      | 10. Aganithaguna   |

As mentioned already, these ten charanas contain seventy-eight names and according

to the above order, these names apparently seem to be a random selection i.e., having no scheme or plan if one follows the above sequence. But if the order of the charanas is re-arranged, we find a beautiful, well carved-out design, following the Thillaisthanam version.

#### Justification for an order in Charanas

In the case of compositions having more than one charana, is it essential that some order has to be maintained for its charanas? This will be a valid question. As a general case it need not be, but in certain specific cases, an order has to be maintained. When musical compositions are born out of ecstasy, as in the case of Sri Thyagaraja, a particular line of thinking or experience is behind the charanas when they are coming out one after another. Sometimes the composition is designed with pre-determination and the charanas are intentionally sung one after the other in a specific sequence. As the musical pattern is the same, only one of the charanas is sung or learnt and thus in course of time, the sequence is neither maintained nor its necessity felt due to ignorance of Kavi Hridayam.

An illustration will perhaps explain better this aspect. Let us take the song 'Poola panpu meedha' in Ahiri raga. In almost all the books, the order of the charanas is given as follows:

- 1st charana: "Madhu sakkara yaana paalu mari arakinchi."  
 2nd charana: "Parimala gandambhu mena bhaguganu bhoosi"  
 3rd charana: "Agamoktha maina sayyanangikarinchi".

A little thinking will prove that this sequence is wrong. The correct one should be by interchanging the first and second charanas i.e.,

- No. 1. "Parimala gandambu" etc.  
 No. 2. "Madhu Chakkarayana Palu"  
 No. 3. "Agamokthamaina Sayya".

This is the Thillaisthanam tradition. The reasoning behind this is as follows. It is the common practice that first, chandana (sandalwood paste) and flowers are offered to the Lord. Thereafter, come the eatables followed by thamboola (betel nuts, etc.) and then the guest is asked to take sayana i.e., rest. This is the common practice in offering upacharas to a deity. If this is understood and accepted, then the above order of charanas as rendered by the Thillaisthanam tradition will make better sense than the one now available in all books. The absence of bhava in the singer has resulted in this jumbling of charanas. This induction is applicable to Jagadanandakaraka song also. Let us examine how it is so.

#### Sequence of Charanas as per Thillaisthanam Rendering

The order of charanas as rendered by Dr. T. Srinivasaraghavan (Doctor Cheema) and Sri S. Parthasarathi of the Thillaisthanam school is as follows:

1. Indraneela mani
2. Pādavijitha mowni
3. Purāna Purusha
4. Srishtisthithyana
5. Sajjana mānasa
6. Karadrithasarajala
7. Nigama neerajamrita

8. Omkara Panjara Kira
9. Amaratāraka Nichaya
10. Aganithagunagana

In the above order, the following points can be observed:

1. A specific pattern has been followed, thereby maintaining a sequence in the charanas one after the other, which is not available in the popular version.
2. The various incidents in Ramayana are covered in the charanas in the same order as the seven kandas.
3. After Rama's names, Krishna's names are taken up.
4. There is a smooth transition from Rama to Krishna by the interpolation of a charana containing names whose meanings will be applicable to both Rama and Krishna i.e., common epithets. The concluding charana also is similarly set up.

These aspects will be analysed in detail, charana by charana.

#### Study of Charanas

1. "Indraneela mani" etc,

This is the first opening charana and not the usually sung 'Amaratharaka.' This contains the seven names (i) Indra neela-mani Sannibhaapagana (ii) Chandra Surya-narayana (iii) Aprameya (iv) Vagheendra-janaka (v) Sakalesa (vi) Subranagendra sayana and (vii) Samana vairi sannutha meaning: "oh Seshasayee! having a beautiful body like that of a blue stone, you are the infinite and Lord of all! Father of



Brahma the creator and with Siva praying to you!"

This charana gives the picture of Lord Narayana in the Ksheerabdhī (milky ocean) in his Viratsvarūpa with the creator Brahma and Siva saying their prayers. Siva can be taken as representing all the Devas who approach him while in difficulties *vide* 'Rudram Srītho Devaganas sa Rudrah Padmasanam so pi cha Padmanabham.'

रुद्रं श्रितो देवगणः स रुद्रः

पद्मासनं सोऽपि च पद्मनाभम् ॥

(पादुका सहस्रं-94)

Thus this charana portrays the scene prior to Ramavathara i.e. prayer by the devas headed by Lord Siva to Sriman Narayana at Vaikunta.

In this connection it is worthwhile to refer to the song "Samugana Nilva" in Kokilavarali raga where the charana runs as follows:

Kamalasandyamara

Kalasavardhilo judaneraga

Kumidikudi moralida

Karyamulu Konasakena Thyagaraja

nutha

## 2. "Padavijitha"

This one holds six namavalis: Padavijitha mowni sapa! Sava pari pala! Vara manthra grahana lola! Parama santha chitha! Janakajaadhipa! Saroja bhava varada! This charana epitomises the events of Bala-khanda. 'Janakajaadhipa' hints at Seetha Kalyanam. The last name is a crowning beauty, the wish of the Creator having been fulfilled because of incarnation of the divine

couple, and hence the term 'Saroja bhava Varada'.

## 3. "Purana Purusha"

This contains eight names and touches Ayodhya and Aranya khandas. These names are:

Purana Purusha! Nrivarathmaja! Asritha paradheena! Kara Viradha Ravana Viravana! Anagha! Parasaramanohara! Avikritha! Thyagarajanutha!

The first three names pertain to Ayodhya Khanda. The epithet Purana Purusha in succession to Saroja Varada of the previous charana hints at his Avathara Sankalpa which begins when he leaves Ayodhya for the forest. Nrivarathmaja is suggestive, as a dutiful son, of his "pithru vachana palanam" in pursuance of which he had to undertake an exile for fourteen years. "Asritha paradheena" indicates his sowlabya (easy accessibility) towards Ghuha, the fisherman king on the banks of the Ganga.

At the start of the Aranyakanda itself, comes a knotty word 'Kara-Viradha-ravana-viravana'. This has been mistakenly translated by all so far, (whether a Telugu knowing person or a Tamilian) as 'one who has killed Kara, Viradha and Ravana'. 'Ravana-viravana' can be translated as 'one who has eliminated Ravana', but this "Viravana" cannot apply to Kara and Viradha also for elimination in the sense of killing and the terms Kara and Viradha will remain aloof. To resolve it, we should remember that this is the *magnum opus* in Sanskrit of Thyagaraja, and arrive at its meaning through Sanskrit grammar. The term 'Ravana' has to be taken not as

a noun but as an adjective, in which case it will mean 'crying or roaring'. As a result the subsequent term 'Viravana' will mean silencing i.e., putting an end to that 'roaring'. So the word 'Kara-viradha-ravana-viravana' will mean putting an end once for all to the crying of Kara and Viradha i.e. the slayer of Kara and Viradha.

For further justification, let us refer to the Aranyakanda. On entering Dhanda-karanya, Rama saw Viradha approaching with a terrible roar.

ददर्श गिरिशृङ्गाभं पुरुषादं महास्वनम् ।

स कृत्वा भैरवं नादं चालयन्निव मेदिनीम् ॥

अङ्केनादाय वैदेहीं अपक्रम्य ततोऽब्रवीत् ॥

(अरण्य 2-5-10)

When he carried away Sita, Rama with Lakshmana chased him and shot piercing arrows at him. He dropped Sita and attacked Rama, making a thundering sound.

अभ्यद्रवत् सुसंकुद्धः तदा रामं सलक्ष्मणम् ।

स विनद्य महानादं . . . . .

(3-14)

In the scuffle he carried away both Rama and Lakshmana on his shoulders and entered a thick forest, roaring like anything.

तावारोप्य ततः स्कन्धं राघवौ रजनीचरः ।

विराधो निनदन् घोरं जगामाभिमुखो वनम् ॥

(3-25)

Even after cutting his hands when they found Viradha attacking them ferociously, they came to know that he could not be killed by weapons. Then they decided to

bury him. A huge pit was dug and he was pushed into it and the same was closed. He was crying to the end.

तमाहवे निर्जितमाशुविक्रमौ

स्थिरावुभौ संयति रामलक्ष्मणौ ।

मुदान्वितौ चिक्षिपतुर्भयावहं

नदन्तं उत्क्षिप्य बलेन राक्षसं ॥

(1-27)

Viradha who was roaring throughout was thus silenced once for all. This is the case with Kara also. He attacked Rama raising a huge cry and showered arrows after smashing his strong armour and wounding him badly-

ततः शरसहस्रेण रामं अप्रतिमौजसम् ।

अर्पयित्वा महानादं ननाद समरे करः ॥

(28-18)

Finally he plucked a huge tree and threw it on Rama with a big shout that Rama was finished.

तं समुत्क्षिप्य बाहुभ्यां विनर्दित्वा महाबलः ।

राममुद्दिश्य चिक्षेप हतस्त्वमिति चाब्रवीत् ॥

(30-18)

This was Kara's last cry because Rama after shattering the tree to pieces, shot a powerful arrow given by Indra and Kara fell dead.

Thus we see that the term 'Ravana-Viravana' has a deeper meaning and has nothing to do with Ravana vadha as translated so far.

Further, as pointed out earlier, since there is a scheme in the order of the names



in each charana, slaying of Ravana has no place in this charana since we are in Aranyakanda only.

#### “Parasara manohara”

This is another word that has been completely misunderstood and given a wrong meaning quite unconnected—viz., “one who has pleased the mind of sage Parasara—father of Vyasa”, Aranyakanda is dealt with in this Charana and there is no incident in Ramayana wherein sage Parasara comes in contact with Rama. (Parasara was the father of Vyasa through Satyavathi whom King Santhanu (Bhishma's father) married later—a Dwaparayuga personality perhaps).

The word ‘Parasara’ has to be split up as ‘Para + Asara’ meaning the best of demons. If that is so, then who is this most distinguished demon? Of course Maricha. Let us see how it is so.

Maricha was leading an ascetic life at the time when Ravana approached him for help in abducting Sita.

तं तु गत्वा परं पारं समुद्रस्य नदीपतेः ।  
ददर्शाश्रमं एकान्ते रम्ये पुण्ये वनान्तरे ॥  
तत्र कृष्णाजिनधरं जटावल्कलधारिणम् ।  
ददर्श नियताहारं मारीचं नाम राक्षसम् ॥

(35-37,38)

Maricha advises Ravana to desist from carrying off Sita and extols Rama.

न नूनं बुध्यसे रामं महावीर्यं गुणोन्नतम् ।  
धर्मो विप्रद्ववान् रामः साधुः सत्यपराक्रमः ।  
राजा सर्वस्य लोकस्य देवानां मघवानिव ॥

(37-3,14)

Not only does he praise Rama but he is so much terrified that wherever he looks, he is perceiving Rama only.

वृक्षे वृक्षे च पश्यामि चीरकृष्णाजिनाम्बरम् ।  
गृहीत धनुषं रामं पाशहस्तमिवान्तकम् ।  
अपि रामसहस्राणि भीतः पश्यामि रावण ।  
रामभूतं इदं सर्वं अरण्यं प्रतिभाति मे ।

(39-14,15)

Even in his sleep he is seeing Rama only,

राममेव हि पश्यामि रहिते राक्षसेश्वर ।  
दृष्ट्वा स्वप्नगतं रामं उद्भ्रमामि विचेतनः ॥  
अहं तस्य प्रभावज्ञः न युद्धं तेन ते क्षमम् ।  
न ते रामकथा कार्या न चैनं द्रष्टुमर्हसि ।  
रामश्च हि महातेजा महासत्त्वो महाबलः ।

(39-16, 22)

So, for Maricha, the whole world consists of Rama only-Sarvam Rama mayam Jagath. He is always thinking of Rama, what else is required—verily he is the most distinguished of all Rakshasas-Para. Asara’. It should be borne in mind that Mareecha breathed his last with the name of Sita on his lips.

There is another beauty in this word-Sri Thyagaraja doesn't want to say that Sita was kidnapped or that Rama was weeping bitterly. This will be most inappropriate as he has started the song as Jagath Ananda Karaka and Jaya Janaki. After mentioning Maricha's name, he has skipped over all unpleasantness and nicely introduces the epithet ‘Avikritha’ in a masterly

way, suggesting that he is a ‘kapata nataka suthra dhari’ and as such is acting as if he is like an ordinary person in the world. This idea is carried on in the next charana.

#### 4. “Srishstisthith”

This charana furnishes the eight names of:

(i) Srishti-sthith-yantha-karaka (ii) Namitha-kaamitha-paladha (iii) Asamaana-gaathra (iv) Sasipathinutha (v) Abdhimada harana (vi) Anuraga-raga (vii) Rajitha-kathaa-saara (viii) Hitha.

The essence of Kishkinda and Sundara Khandas is covered by one namavali for each and the Yuddha Khanda is touched. The first name is the connecting link with the previous charana and is an expansion of the idea contained in the name Avikritha.

‘Namitha-kamitha-palada’ reads better here although there is another version of ‘Amitha-kamitha-palada’ since this word is representative of Kishkindakhanda itself. Here the term ‘namitha’ connotes ‘Sugriva’. Sugriva Saranagathi resulting in his coronation (pattabhishekam) is the core of this Khanda.

आसाद्य च ततो रामं कृताञ्जलिपुटोऽभवत् ।

पादयोः पतितं मूर्ध्ना तमुत्थाप्य हरीश्वरम् ।

प्रेम्णा च बहुमानाश्च राघवः परिष्वजे ।

(किष्किन्दा-38-16-18)

The above slokas of Valmiki have been encapsulated in the term ‘Namitha’; What was desired by Sugriva was the slaying of Vali and his coronation as the king of Kishkinda. His desires were fulfilled by Rama.

भवत् प्रसादात् सुग्रीवः पितृ पैतामहं महत् ।  
वानाराणां सुदुष्प्रापं प्राप्तो राज्यं इदं प्रभो ॥

(26-4)

Thus speaks Hanuman to Rama after Vali's cremation is over (Ch. 23 sl 4) Rama permits Sugriva to go to the city saying,

अभिषिञ्चस्व राज्ये च सुहृदः संगर्हय । (26-18)

All these ideas are put in a nutshell by Sri Thyagaraja through this namavali ‘namitha kamitha-palada’.

In the same trend he summarises the Sundara Khanda by the word ‘Asamana-gathra’; The meeting of Sita by Hanuman is the climax of this Khanda. At that time, at Sita's request, Hanuman's description of Rama as one having none equal to him either in beauty or valour is the ultimate one to convince Sita about the genuineness of his being Rama's messenger.

After Hanuman had proved his credentials, in turn Sita narrates an incident that had taken place earlier at Panchavati, not known to Lakshmana also since at that time they were alone. That one is the Kakasura episode wherein even his father Indra could not save him from the Brahmastra created from a blade of grass.

स पित्रा च परित्यक्तः . . . . (सुन्दर-38-33)

This is hinted by the word Sasipathinutha i.e., praised by Indra.

Now Yuddha Khanda events are described. The word ‘Abdhi-mada-harana’—one who has vanquished the pride of the Lord of oceans-Varuna—is indicative of



Sethubhandana. When Rama found that Varuna was not responding to his request, he got angry and thought it was due to his arrogance,

अश्लेषः समुद्रस्य न दर्शयति यत् स्वयम् ।  
(युद्ध-21-14)

He released arrows and Varuna unable to bear them appeared in person with folded

hands with a promise to make way for the monkeys to cross the ocean to Lanka,

मुमोच विशिखान् उग्रान् वज्रानिव शतक्रतुः ।  
(21-27)

सागरः समुपक्रम्य पूर्वं आमन्त्र्य वीर्यवान् ॥  
अब्रवीत् प्राञ्जलिः वाक्यं राघवं शरपाणिनम् ।  
हरीणां तरणे राम करिष्यामि यथा स्थलम् ॥  
(22-24,29)

## Cultural Scene in Karnataka

By

T. B. NARASIMHACHAR

In connection with its 38th annual celebrations, Keshava Nritya Shala, under the stewardship of its Founder-Director Guru H. R. Keshavamurthi, held a series of programmes on the academic aspects of Dance by way of analytical study of Dance Theory and Practice, over a period of 6 months from October 1986. The different dance forms prevalent in India, such as Bharatha-natyam, Odissi, Kathak, Kathakali, Kuchipudi, Yakshagana, were dealt with by experienced, senior dance gurus, with reference to Nritya, Natya and Abhinaya with special accent on tala prakarana, Rasa prakarana, Nayaka-Nayika prakarana, Paada Bheda prakarana, Hastha prakarana, etc., Its educative value to students and connoisseurs of dance cannot be gainsaid.

### Seminar on Music Teaching

A lively and interesting 3-day Seminar on 'Teaching Methodology of classical Indian music, was held from the 3rd to 5th

of April this year. It was conducted by the Department of Performing Arts of the Bangalore University under the 'Faculty Improvement programme' of the University Grants Commission, New Delhi. The objective of the Seminar was stated to be "to arrive at a viable, scientific methodology for teaching music, considering the significance and the nature of complexity of classical music."

After a glittering inaugural function at the Ravindra Kalakshetra, the invitees, delegates and observers from various Universities in India, which conduct courses in the performing arts at the graduate, post-graduate and Doctoral levels, met for the first time in South India at the Senate hall of the Central college, Bangalore, to discuss the subject of the Seminar, under the overall direction of Dr. Padma Murthi, Head of the Department of the Bangalore University and ex-officio Director of the Seminar. There were daily two sessions, followed by

short music recitals by well-known teacher-artistes of the Hindusthani and Carnatic systems. About a dozen speakers who are on the music faculties of various universities read out papers setting out their views and experiences on the subject. By and large, all of them touched upon the plus and minus points of the ancient Gurukula system, vis-a vis contemporary life styles of the teacher and the taught; they pointed out the need for the adoption of some of its salient features in today's institutionalised music teaching set-up. In other words they conceded the need for closer and longer hours of association between the teacher and the taught, to inculcate in the latter a deeper and more purposeful knowledge of the theory of music to subserve its practice. Some of the speakers couched their views in high-falutin and long-drawn-out discourses and some others went off at a tangent to correlated subjects.

Smt. D. R. Saroja, Joint Director for Music education in the Education department of Karnataka, suggested that music teaching at the University level should take into account the needs of those who want to become (i) good performing artistes (ii) good teachers (iii) musicologists and Research scholars and (iv) discerning listeners/audience (Rasikas). She pointed out that this could be done by suitable adjustments in the curricula and syllabii.

A. V. Anand and H. P. Ramachar, two leading and senior percussionists of Karnataka pointed out during the closing stages of the seminar that it was regrettable that no percussionist-teacher figured in the Seminar to speak about the problems connected with the teaching of percussion instruments which required specialised train-

ing though teachers of veena and violin participated in the Seminar. By and large, representatives of the Carnatic system of music dominated the Seminar. In particular, speakers from Karnataka were very prominent during the academic sessions and the Question and Answer hour. Dr. Padma Murthi as Director-coordinator had circulated an elaborate note on the subject for the guidance of the speakers.

In the ultimate analysis, the issue reduced itself to the consideration of the relative accent to be laid between Lakshya (practice-imagination-creative faculty) and Lakshana (Theory-Rules). Our hoary texts have laid down in unequivocal terms that 'Lakshya' should prevail in the realm of performing arts. It was surprising that although there were many senior musician-teachers acting as moderators at each session, none of them was called upon to sum up the proceedings and offer their own remarks thereon. It hardly seemed an occasion for exchange of views amongst the participants from different universities. Lady delegates and teachers played an active part in the deliberations. Almost every speaker complimented the Director of the Seminar-Dr. Padma Murthi-for the excellent arrangements made. She promised that a book containing the deliberations in detail would be brought out. If published, it may be useful to research scholars. Some of the participants who also gave concerts were Prof. Vidyadhar Vyas of Bombay University, Prof. Debu Chaudhary of Delhi University, Prof. R. Visweswaran and Prof. V. Ramaratnam of Mysore University, Dr. S. Ramanathan, Prof. T. N. Krishnan and Prof. T. R. Subramanyam of Delhi university, etc.



## Sri Rama Navami Festivals

As is to be expected, the Sri Rama Navami season saw a glut of music concerts at mainly four centres in the four main extensions of Bangalore, viz., Chamarajpet, Sankarapuram, Seshadripuram and Malle-swaram. The attendance at these music festivals has been declining over the past couple of years, it varying according to the popularity of the artiste concerned. The quality of music followed the 'chewing the cud' pattern, churning out audience favourites. Sri Rama Seva Mandali, Chamarajpet, took credit, as in the past, for the longest lasting festival—nearly a month. Visiting artistes made hay in terms of remuneration though the admission was open to all.

### Laasya

Gandharva Vidya Niketan, under the lead of Smt. Nandini Alva, wife of Minister Dr. Jeevaraj Alva, in collaboration with I. T. C., and Hotel Windsor Manor, presented a mixed cultural festival on 9 evenings at the Chowdiah Memorial hall under the heading 'LAASYA'. It proved rich fare by way of Dance ballets by Sri Rama Bharatiya Kala Kendra, Delhi, light music by Jesudas, English drama by Theatre unit, Bombay, with Naseeruddin Shah in the lead; a Kannada play; a Tamil play by Cho's troupe; Hindi play by a Bombay theatre group again with Naseeruddin Shah; and to top it all, Bharatha Nrityam by Dr. Padma Subrahmanyam and a delightful music recital by Dr. Balamuralikrishna. These week-end programmes lasted from early April to mid-May.

### Taala Vaadyotsava

The 6th percussive arts festival-cum-conference was held by the Percussive Arts

Centre, formerly known as Palghat Mani Iyer Memorial Arts Centre, for 5 days at the Bangalore Gayana Samaja hall from 29th May to June 2nd. It was appropriate enough that veteran mridangist Thanjavur T. K. Murthi was chosen for the annual K. Puttu Rao Memorial award instituted by his son K. K. Murthi, as also to preside over the conference and receive the title 'Mridanga Shiromani'. On the inaugural day, rare percussive instruments like Idakka, Thimila, Chanda, Karata-vadya by M. Krishnan Kutty Marar, Gangadhara, Marar, Narasimha Bhatta, Kum. M. S. Pushpalatha and Mahalingappa Umadi and others. There was also a demonstration of percussive instrumental sequences through his voice by S. R. Ramamurthi of Bangalore.

Prof. S. R. Janakiraman of the Tirupathi Music college delivered an Endowment lecture on 'Thala and Dasa Praanaas'. There was a symposium on the 'Historical, textual, scientific and artistic aspects of Percussion art' compered by Prof. S. K. Ramachandra Rao, the participants being B. M. Sundaram of Pondicherry Akashwani, Vikram Parachure of Rishi Valley, B. V. K. Sastri and Bangalore Venkatram of Bangalore. Two monographs entitled 'References to Taalavadyas in Kannada literature' by B. V. K. Sastri and 'Traditional art of Tabla play' by Nikhil Ghosh of Bombay were released during the festival. On the entertainment side there were violin duet (Hindusthani) by Dr. N. Rajam and her daughter-disciple Sangita Shankar; Flute recital by Sikkil Sisters; Vocal recital by R. K. Srikantan and party and violin trio by H. V. Krishnamurthi, Anur Ramakrishna and A. Veerabadriah.

Bangalore Venkatram deserves credit for organising this festival-cum-conference on a successful scale by pooling the financial and other resources of many patrons of art. The actual award function took place at the Chowdiah Memorial hall before a large gathering, when the Palghat Mani Cash award and the title 'Mridanga Shiromani' were presented to Murthi. The other programmes were 'Palani Krishna Iyer memorial day' with a symposium on 'Terracotta musical art', unveiling of a portrait of Palghat Mani Iyer by T. K. Murthi, an interesting percussion duet by Arjun Shejwal (Hindusthani Pakhwaj) and A. V. Anand (mridangam) and Tabla solo by Ramkumar Misra of Benares. Altogether, it was a concerted effort to highlight percussive art in Indian Music (North and South). It is noteworthy that at least in South India, there are more talented percussionists than outstanding vocal lists amongst the younger generation. The Laya Lahari percussion ensemble presented a special percussive programme to the backdrop of the multi-violin support by Ayyanar College of music.

### Lec—Dems

The Indian Institute of World Culture had arranged with the co-operation of the Karnataka Gana Kala Parishat, a series of 'Lec-dems' to highlight the contribution of some oldtime and modern composers like Pallavi Sesha Iyer (by Gayatri Chandra-sekhar), Veena Venkatagiriappa (by his disciple M. Cheluvarayaswami), Chengalvaraya Sastri and Ponniah Pillay (by Bellary Venkateshachar), Veena Krishnamachar (brother of Tiger Varadachar) by E. P. Alamelu and Honnappa Bhagavathar and T. V. Muthachar by M. R. Manjula and G. Indira.

## Bhavan's Activities

The Bangalore Kendra of the Bharathiya Vidya Bhavan has been almost regularly arranging workshops in music by senior musicians of the State in addition to the special programme under the heading 'Forgotten Melodies', Dr. V. Doreswami Iyengar conducted a workshop on Veena Seshanna. M.A. Narasimhachar chose 'rare compositions' of Walajapettai Venkataramana Bhagavathar for his workshop. He taught a Swarajathi in Bhairavi, Varnam in Kedara, krithis in Nama-Narayani, Anandabhairavi, (in praise of Tyagarajaswami), Nadanamakriya and Senjuruti, to a batch of about 30 students.

R. K. Srikantan conducted two workshops. One was on the allied Ragas 'Nayaki' and 'Durbar', with reference to Ragalakshana and rare sancharas. By way of illustration he taught 'Aparadhamula' by Tyagaraja in 'Khanda Chapu' tala; 'Raghavendra Guru Mani-thosmi' by Vasudevachar; 'Smara Manasa' by Swathi Thirunal; all in the raga Durbar and 'Dayaleni Brathukemi' by Tyagaraja 'Palayamam Brihadeeswara' by Dikshitar, 'Charachara Jagadroope' by Muthiah Bhagavathar; 'Brihannayaki' by Mysore Maharaja in the raga Nayaki. The other workshop was on 'Purandara Dasa's Navarathna Keertana Malika' on parallel with Tyagaraja's Pancharatna krithis to be sung at Purandara Dasa's Aradhana. The Bhavan has planned many more such workshops in the coming months.

Vidwan T. Puttaswamiah (vocalist brother of Mysore T. Chowdiah) passed away on 15-5-'87 at the age of 75 years.



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## News & Views

### Mummoorthi Jayanthi, Tiruvarur

By general consent, the third Mummoorthi Festival at Tiruvarur, organised by the Sri Kanchi Kamakoti Peeta Sangeetha Seva Trust, of which Padmasri Lalgudi Jayaraman is the Convenor and Trustee was a success both from the music point of view and the organisers.' Enthusiastic crowds, streamlined arrangements and a spate of fine music, seem to have given a stamp of durability to the festival, which was spread over a week, with an average of three concerts by the top musicians and leavened by erudite discourses by giants like Thiru Kripanandavariyar, Sri T. S. Balakrishna Sastrigal ("Tyagaraja Ramayanam") and Pulavar Keeran.

The Jayanthis of the Trinity celebrated in their birthplace Tiruvarur have their own emotional appeal to the raw or refined intellect. Harold Osborne has said that "the function of music is not stimulation of feeling but the expression of it". It is the peculiar genius of the Trinity that their output measures up to any standard however high. In their Kritis which are the diaries of their soul, mood and music combine on equal terms. Their music is not the product of empiricism but the reflection of the highest impulses of divinity, art and aesthetic feeling. Formal analysis cannot fully explain their rare essences, much less "the inseparable human compound of ecstasy and genius" (Y. Menuhin) that we see in their compositions. The devout and the fervent admirers of the Trinity hope

that, at least at Tiruvayuru, the Jayanthis will recapture the correct empathy for the three musical geniuses, which seems to be eluding aradhana celebrations!

### Teaching Methodology for Classical Music

There was no lack of glitter or ceremonial at the All India Seminar on the "Teaching Methodology for Classical Indian Music", which was held at Bangalore from April 3-5-1987 under the auspices of the Department of Performing Arts of the Bangalore University, pursuant to the facility improvement programme of the U. G. C. New Delhi. Sri A. N. Banerjee, the Governor, inaugurated the convention after Dr. D. M. Nanjundappa, Vice-Chancellor, had welcomed him and the bustling Dr. Padma Murthy, the Director of the Seminar—a frequent and distinguished contributor to "Shanmukha"—had pinpointed the problems of music teaching in a rather lengthy address. Padmabhushan Dr. M. L. Vasanthakumari's incisive remarks on the master-pupil relationships, and Dr. Kapila Vatsayan's panoramic and emotion-filled survey of the artistic firmament stood out, however. Dr. V. K. Narayana Menon's keynote address, listed in the programme, failed to materialise for reasons best known to the organisers and never explained.

A large number of papers and interesting talks by savants like Dr. R. Satyanarayana, Dr. S. Ramanathan, Dr. V. Dore-swami Iyengar, Prof R. Visveswaran of Mysore University, Prof Debu Chahdhuri



(Delhi University), Sangitha Kalanidhi Prof T. N. Krishnan, the veteran violinist (Delhi University) and others were read and discussed. But to a candid observer, the speeches seemed far too prolix, theory clogged and frankly boring.

Prof. T. N. Krishnan was the first to strike a practical note no doubt born out of 25 years' teaching experience - when he raised the question of standardisation of syllabus at all teaching centres as a prime requisite since there is at present no uniformity at all.

The discussions lacked the practical bias, which alone would have lent some substance to the theories propounded and perhaps shown the light at the end of the tunnel. Some concrete class-room instruction models, illustrated with a small complement of gifted young children receiving lessons from an experienced musicologist in vocal music (swarajati, varnam, raga, swara, pallavi etc.) and in the basic methods of instrumental handling, with running commentaries on the efficiency of each method, might have been far more worthwhile for the thousands of rupees spent and the time lost in speeches by the rambling "experts".

Apparently, not enough preparation had gone into the structure of the Seminar. How else can a dispassionate surveyor of the scene react to the discussions when the official summing-up itself only claims this much :

- "(a) Since music offers to each child an opportunity to express its ideas, thought and feelings and is a "companion in solitude", it should be taught at all levels of education.

(b) Music should be "a legitimate subject area in education along with science and arts subjects.

(c) Classical music education should be made available for a wider section of people.

(d) There is an urgent need to start music training courses for music teachers'.

More than anything else, there seems to be an urgent need to start training courses for those who would dare *speak* on practical music. The plain fact emerges that all of Dr. Padma Murthy's men and all their hobby horses could not put the humpty dumpty of the Seminar again.

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#### Maharajapuram Viswanatha Iyer Trust

Maharajapuram Santhanam and his fellow-trustees have made this Trust an instrument of great causes, ever since it was launched so hopefully in 1986. The April 1986 festivals featured distinguished musicians young and old. The April '87 aradhana series held in the Krishna Gana Sabha marked a further advance in the activities of the Trust-Smt D. K. Pattamal was honoured for her great contribution to Carnatic music; felicitations were offered to Dr. N. Ramani on the conferment of Padma Sri, and to Messrs. B. Rajam Iyer, Sri Nedunuri Krishnamurthy and M. Chandrasekharan as recipients of the Sangeet Natak Akademy's awards; cash awards of Rs. 1000/- each to veterans S. Natarajasundaram Pillai (Nagaswaram), C. S. Murugabhoopathy and Kandadevi Alagiriswamy, as a token of appreciation of their services to Carnatic music - all very well deserved indeed.

But where this Trust has a new thrust is in extending financial assistance (Rs. 200/- per month for two years) to deserving young vocalists. Three leading musicians sat down and selected four from among those who applied. These are 1) S. Subramanyam (disciple of Smt. Rukmini Rajagopalan) 2) B. Balasubramanyam (disciple of B. Krishnamurthy) 3) Smt. Subhasini Parthasarathy (disciple of T. M. Thiagarajan) 4) K. Ramesh (disciple of Trichy Swaminatha Iyer) and 5) Smt. B. Lalitha of the Teacher's College of Music, Music Academy. The Trust has similar proposals in view for encouraging instrumental music. Alone among trusts it has an eye on the future of our classical music and deserves warm encomiums for its vigorous efforts.

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#### Palani Subramania Pillai

The disciples of the mridangam maestro, the late Palani Subramania Pillai, celebrated his death anniversary on 21st May 1987 at the Sangeetha Vidwat Samajam in a manner that redounded to their credit. His chief sishya, Thiru M. N. Kandaswamy, took enormous pains to make the day memorable. Special features of the celebration were a Thala Vadya ("Pancha Jathi Tala Sangamam" by a set of trained pupils), the honouring of laya vidwans C. S. Murugabhoopathy, T. K. Murthy, Kumbakonam Rajappa Iyer, thavil vidwan Shanmukhasundaram Pillai, Madras Kannan, besides a few others and last but not least, a splendid music recital by Sri T. N. Seshagopalan in the company of S.D. Sridhar (Violin), Murugabhoopathy and Vinayakaram.

The loyalty and gusto evident on the occasion underlined the tragedy of a great laya vidwan in the peak of his career snatched by the cruel hand of fate, before obtaining formal honours of any sort. The poignant thought kept recurring that, had 'Palani' lived for just a year more, he would have got all honours like Sangitha Natak Academy Award, Padma Bhushan and perhaps "Sangitha Kalanidhi" too from the Music Academy. To his numerous admirers, which included the entire performing fraternity as well as discerning rasikas, Palani's image is not less bright because he just missed obtaining those formal accolades from Government or music organisations. Palani will always live in the hearts of the public, not least for his laya prowess and his personality that was as principled as it was sweet and enchanting.

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#### Dr. Badrinath's Sacred Mission

"Fame usually comes to those who are thinking about something else—very rarely to those who say to themselves, 'Go to, now let me be a celebrated individual,' (Dr. O.W. Holmes). Dr. S. S. Badrinath, the eminent ophthalmologist and the moving spirit of "Netralaya" in Madras never wished for fame, one may be sure. Endowed by nature with uncommon ability and dedication in his chosen line of alleviating suffering, he could with private practice have become rich as Croesus, but "wealth's wasteful tricks he would not learn nor ape the glittering upstart fool". Hence his unsurpassed sense of dedication for providing relief to those suffering. When he sees one, something intensely



human and definite pierces to the seat of his earning and instincts, one supposes. And he has set about with unflagging energy to collect lakhs of rupees *inter alia* through that instrument of great causes, Dr. M. S. Subbulakshmi, the "nightingale of India", to establish "Netralaya" as one of the greatest eye - hospitals of the world. That Dr. Bhadri has succeeded a great deal in his mission goes without saying. The Angel of Mercy is crowning his humanitarian work with success.

The stature of "Sanskrit", in the public eye has gone up since it chose Dr. Badrinath as the recipient of its Cultural Award for 1986 at a fine function held on

2nd May in the Venus Colony, Madras-18. Dr. B. Krishna Rao felicitated him, Smt. Prema Pandurangan spoke in terms whose flow recalled Tennyson's "Brook" while Kainkarya Siromani, Sri S. V. Narasimhan welcomed the guests in his inimitably warm manner. Dr. Badri accepted the Award with typical modesty. Congratulations "Sanskrit" for equating unselfish devotion to the alleviation of suffering with culture. As Poojya Rajaji said in his lecture on "Culture" at the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan (1963): Culture is a social virtue and therefore comes to notice and pleases more clearly than virtue, Character and Culture the mind inside and the external activities, grow together.

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S. ANANTHA SESHAN

## Cultural Scene in Bombay

By

Dr. Sulochana Rajendran

The vignettes the Shanmukananda Sangeetha Sabha offered last quarter were varied and rich, the artistes ranging from the young stalwart T. V. Sankaranarayanan, veteran Voleti Venkateswarulu, ebullient Nookala Chinna Satyanarayana to old-timer Trivandrum R. S. Mani and the buoyant Aleppey Venkatesan. The fare included two dramas, "Saint Tygaraja" and "Kaakkai Chiraginile" plus local 'stars' at the mini-theatre.

### TVS in High Gear

For one who has attuned his mind and voice to musical excellence, TVS has been progressing from strength to strength. The robust relish in his voice, the weighty pause at pivotal points and the lofty range keep him in fine form. His recital in March registered yet another characteristic of his style - that of spiralling high and traversing the octave with the vocal chords fully open to nuances and subtleties. This at no cost of depth and musical insight or explorative instinct in niraval-swaras. His felicity over the range was stunning. The Pallavi in Kambhoji (Triputa Tala) with smooth vinyasa, the alapanas of Kalyani ("Nambikkettavar") and Kapi ("Inta Saukhyamanine") as also the elusive Natakapriya ("Geeta Vadya") were essays of aesthetic beauty and classical substance. Yet a word of caution to the versatile TVS. A voice fully opened at that peak, at times, jars

musical sensitivity; a little modulation would do all the magic.

Enjoying every moment of his participation, violinist M. Chandrasekharan glided in gayaki style with gamakas and grace. If alapanas had a unique Karnataka flavour he sprinkled his swaras with Hindustani fragrance. Narendran (mridangam) moved close to them in rhythmic harmony.

### Natural Elegance

There is least exertion; little calculation: Not even a breather. Music flows continuous, spontaneous and with an ease. He delves and dives into melodic aesthetics of ragas and surfaces with pearls of compositions. His renditions give the sahitya a rare sheen. That is Voleti to whom music is an aradhana, be it a recital or a riyaz.

It was one more session of pleasing music (April) wherein the very opening strains of Begada set the solemn atmosphere. The highlights were Bhadrachala Ramadas' "Oh Rama Neenamamen Ruchira" (Purvikalyani) and Tyagaraja's "Kaddanuvariki" (Todi) - two grand edifices with alapanas and niraval-swaras.

### Nookala's Calculating music

Nookala, the other musician from Andhra chose a different stride - the more exacting, exploring, leaving nothing, not



even the quaint aesthetics, to chance. There was an academician dormant in the performer, Nookala. On the other an instinctive thrust for extemporised flourish. And in the harmony he made of both lay the strength and success of his vidwat and voice.

Little wonder he gave a face-lift to even familiar songs and made them refreshing. He could tide over a sore voice with his robust bani. His Saveri and "Rama Bana" echoed the poignant depths of the mode.

Peri Sriramamurthy (violin) seemed to have greater rapport with Nookala than with Voleti. So also Yella Venkateswara Rao (Mridangam) who unleashed 'sound and fury' the previous day, but settled to a softer tone and stride when accompanying Nookala.

#### R. S. Mani's Aesthetic Display

There was all that sheen of old being gold in R. S. Mani's music (May). For an old timer his concept of music and performance was refreshingly aesthetic but with a touch of modernity. There was the stamp of tradition, yet he performed with present day zest. With a voice that has power and range he blended the authentic classical technique with an arresting performing aura and thereby engaged audience attention. He even wove the Hindustani vilambit in Karnatak idiom. His Pantuvarali alapana and interpretation of "Siva Siva" were proof enough of his adherence to classical technique and his instinct for 'integrational' efforts.

#### Venkatesan's Mixed Fare

Aleppey Venkatesan, a scion of the Ariyakudi school, was all set to exploit his versatility. With a powerful and resilient voice, this Chartered Accountant sure has steadily progressed on the concert form attaining a status. But there seemed to be some restlessness, some ambiguity in his style. Going in for more virtuosic niraval and swara display and unduly modulating the voice in Tara Shadja and above were not on healthy lines. Moreover his style of raga essaying did not eschew microtonal alien strayings. However, his potentiality did surface in Todi and "Kaliteera Vandarul" and Saveri Khanda Triputa Pallavi. The Ghana Ragamalika Tanam made a refreshing facet.

It was disappointing that V. V. Ravi (violin) did not stand up to his reputation and tripped often in rhythmic rounds. Even the tonality of his playing was not faultless. He was, however, agile and responsive to R. S. Mani. Accompanying on both occasions, Tanjore Upendran stood as a pillar of rhythmic support.

#### Homage To a Great Nattuvanar

As a homage to Bharata Vidwan T. P. Kuppiyah Pillai during his birth centenary year, an 'anjali' programme of Bhakti Nritya was presented by the students of Sri Rajarajeswari Bharata Natya Kala Mandir, under the auspices of our Sabha.

Where group dances generally turn out to be variety entertainment, more light-veined too, this was different in more ways than one. Conceived by the dynamic son of the Natyacharya, Guru Kalyana-

sundaram, it was different from the usual Bharata Natyam recital. The repertoire comprised hymns and compositions of saints and seers of the past as well as of contemporary composers, with ennobling Bhakti as their basic theme and bringing out a symphony of melody and mime.

It has been one of the ambitions of the 'Guru to bring back onto the modern stage 'the atmosphere of Bhakti' that once reigned supreme in the field of art, especially dance, before yielding to 'sringara', and also dispel the wrong notion that musical compositions, especially kritis, rich in bhakti and bhava, are not for visual interpretation. And he drove home his point by choreographing the dances strictly in Bharata Natyam, by keeping the element of drama subdued and achieving greater impact through subtle reflections and restrained expressions.

#### Interesting items

The recital commencing on a solemn note with Adi Sankara's Ganesha Pancharatnam and Ganapati Kavuthvam comprised Tyagaraja's Nattai Pancharatnam, "Jagadanandakaraka", a couple of dramatic themes — "Kuchelopakyam" based on the Tamil version of Narayaneeyam, rendered by R. Padmanabhan of Bombay and set to music by Principal A. S. Panchapakesa Iyer of Bharatiya Music & Arts Society; Bharatiyar's Panchali Sabatham, Tiruppugazh, Sivan's "Adum Deivam" (Kambhoji), depicting Tandava-Lasya aspects; and Tanjavur Sankara Iyer's "Ranjani" Ragamalika. Perhaps the only semblance of the conventional number was the Tillana which was meant to reflect the spirit of joy that pervaded Andal Kalyanam.

More than his vision and improvisation, the Guru's training, direction, and conducting the team of ten dancers who did the numbers in groups of four, five and ten to a synchronised harmony deserved acclaim. No less significant part the orchestra played, led by Indubala Ganapathy, the melodious vocalist assisted by Shanti and with the Guru and his nephew Vasant on Nattuvangam.

#### For the Handicapped—A Great Day

It was a touching sight, a heart-rending experience to the audience watching the not-so-fortunates enacting Ramayana in dance idiom. Dainty Sita had no vision, yet she had no constraints in enjoying the flora and fauna during vanvas and was all excitement at the sight of the golden deer! Rama was hard of hearing and mute, still he was stately in deportment, calm in disposition. Filling in where the other lacked, the couple made an excellent pair in the lead roles. One could not believe that the upright Ravana who showed no less arrogance and vigour was a mentally retarded girl and Sita's Sakhis and the wily Mandra were orthopaedic handicaps! To cap it all the team of 46 have had no formal training in dance!

Certainly the credit goes to Jayashree Nair for her patience and perseverance in choreographing and training the troupe (almost a year-long toil) and conducting the whole ballet with cue. And the music director K. Narayanan set the melodic backdrop to "Bhavayami Raghuramam" imaginatively heightening the emotions and mood more through melody than by expression on stage. Those who could hear no



melody rested their 'steps' on 'cue' while those without vision were guided by melody and rhythm.

That there was no 'handicap' which fine arts could not over-come was exactly what the Indian Society for the Rehabilitation of the Handicapped has been aiming to achieve. They presented a year back "Krishna Leela" produced by the Nalanda Research Centre. Dance may not only train and discipline their limbs and mind. It map even help them rehabilitate and live on par with their more fortunate artists, with self-confidence and self-reliance.

### 3-D Base

Another group dance organised and presented by the students of Nritya Geetanjali at the King George High School Hall brought forth the ingenuity of its Director, Guru Rajee Narayan, as a three-in-one force. As a composer, choreographer and conductor-singer she lent a 3-D base for the dances. Swati Tirunal's "Kamalajasya" in an elaborate dance-drama came in for a neat visualisation of the Dasavathara with intricate nritta sequences as embellishment. A rare Tamil verse cast in a dizzying pace captured the vigour of the Tandava and the dancers performed with zest.

The highlight of the evening was, however, a Natya Nataka woven around

the Parijata episode, with overtones of Harikatha. Stances in Telugu and Tyagaraja kritis gave the dance depiction a 'mix' of folk and classical elements. And loka dharmi was liberally used for Satyabhama-Rukmini confrontation, virtually in a 'combato', with poor Krishna looking 'helpless'! Parvati, Saraswati and Mala gave it a true folk fillip.

### Ram Navami Feature

During the Rama Navami festival got up by the Asthika Samaj, two of Rajee Narayan's students, Jayashree Rao and Kesari Sadashiv came out with impressive performances. Endowed with aptitude and innate grace for dance, both showed promise. Jayashree performed selections from the Guru's "Nritya Geetamala", while Kesari's repertoire had majority of Kannada compositions. Both had Ramayana as the theme for their central piece—i.e., Varnam—Jayashree doing it to Rajee's "Kosalai Kumara" (Kharaharapriya) and Kesari to a Purandara Dasa Pada in Ragamalika. The choreography was done with the mind on the talent and performing experience of the dancers. Both danced with an innate relish and confidence. They have a bright future should they pursue the art with dedication. Their training in Nattuvangam has certainly enhanced their performing confidence.

★

## OBITUARY

### Prof: R. K. RAMANATHAN

"Shanmukha" is bereaved—two of its brilliant contributors have passed away, leaving the world of aesthetic writing so much poorer.

The first was Prof. R. K. Ramanathan, younger brother of Violin Vidvan R. K. Venkatarama Sastry, the devout Tyagaraja bhaktha. Ramanathan distinguished himself in two faculties—teaching English and music both at Bangalore University. Readers of this journal can never forget the articles he contributed from time to time—especially the two articles concerning the leading musicians of South India (Vioal and Violin). His diction was for him a perfect vehicle for his analytical brain—flexible, smooth, unobtrusively elegant, never forced (The late Jon Higgins marvelled at the command of the medium and the incisiveness of his point of view).

As for his music, he was an admirer of GNB and was a good vocalist, besides being a good teacher. He was honoured by the Sangeetha Natak Academy of Karnataka and was actively associated with the Academy of Music, Bangalore, located

in the famed Chowdiah Hall. Prof Ramanathan's regard for this Journal was equalled only by his criticism of the poor publicity it had for an organ of its merit and stature.

### T. SATYANATH

T. Satyanath of Cochin was of that brilliant breed of company executives who develop a deep passion for art, especially music, West and East and who aspire to write Queen's English without blemish. (Numerous were the occasions when the Editor of this Journal had been gently pulled up for "Vernacularisms". "Sat" as his friends called him, was a good art critic and contributed much to the "Indian Express" of Cochin. "Shanmukha" published his correspondence with Yehudi Menuhin after he had put him a question on the phone relating to music (BBC's open programme) and got an oral answer. "Sat" had a large variety of tapes, including those of Hindusthani classical. He was a good host—Lord Harewood and Dr. V. K. Narayana Menon and others were his guests. To this writer his demise is a personal loss too.

KSM



## THE ALL INDIA CARNATIC MUSICIAN'S ASSOCIATION

AICMA was inaugurated by the Tamil Nadu Industries Minister, Sri K. Rajaram, at Madras, recently. The dignified function was addressed by Dr. Semmangudi Srinivasa Iyer, Lalgudi Jayaraman, Dr. Emani Sankara Sastry, Maharajapuram Santhanam, all of whom explained the objects of the new body to an audience of hundreds, including the representatives of the sister body, the Musicians' Forum which has completed almost an year. The formation of two bodies, ostensibly with similar objectives, has been the subject of comment in the media. Padmasri Lalgudi tried to meet the criticism when he explained that AICMA was an all-India body formed to further the cause of musicians all over the country by taking up with the organisations at the Centre the problems

faced by musicians—eg. selection of artists for official foreign tours, improving the facilities available for travel within the country, adequate recognition by All India Radio & Doordarshan of their status etc.

How actually AICMA will get down to brass-tacks — which problem will get preferential attention and lastly, the million-dollar question—how artists of the South will succeed in presenting a united facade before Government—these are all questions the answers to which will not be found in a day or months. That there are problems for musicians nobody can deny — AICMA is, at the very least, a late attempt to grapple with them. Better late than never!

“CATO”



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